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ZZAP! 64

ISSUE 26 JUNE 1987

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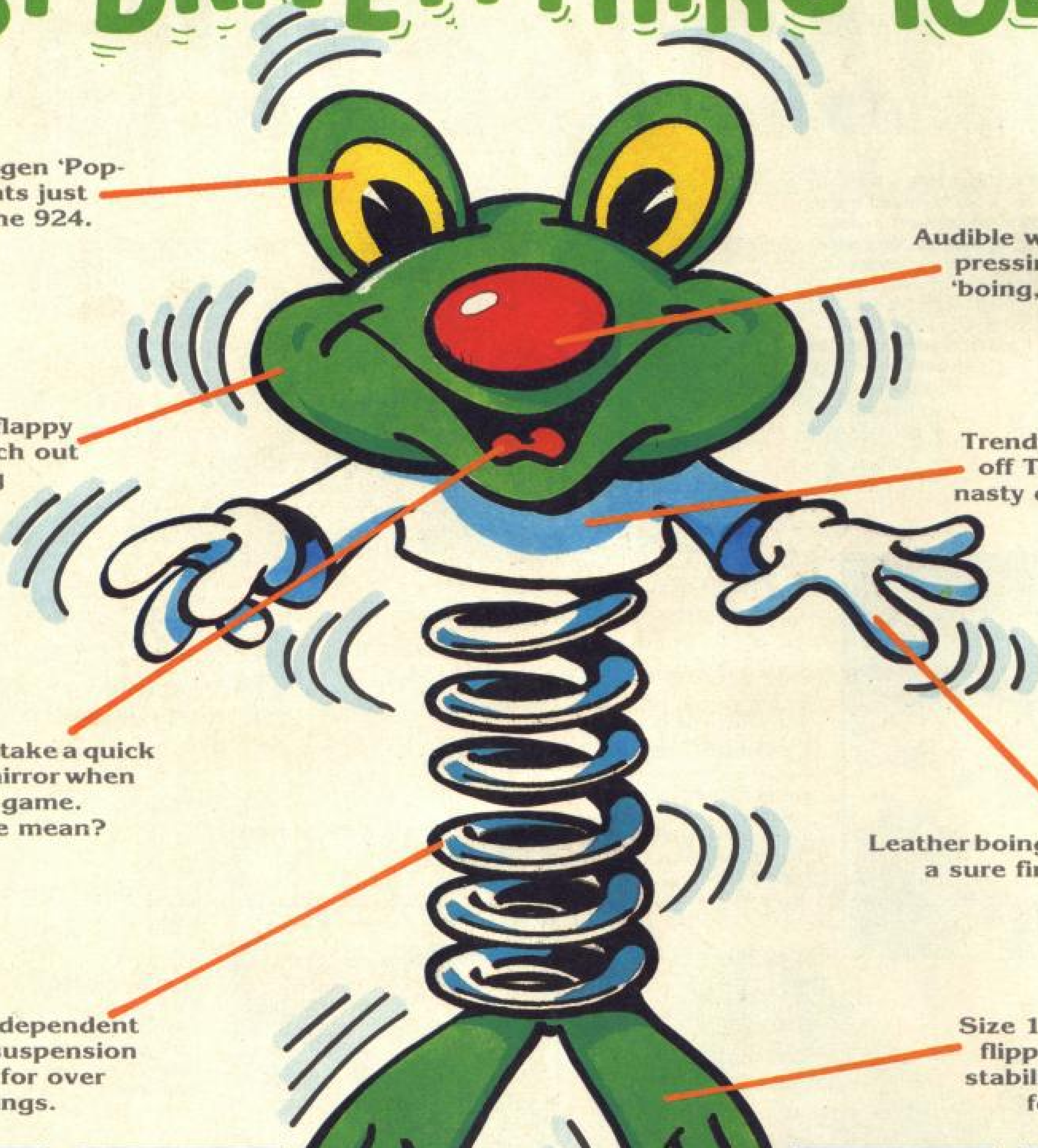
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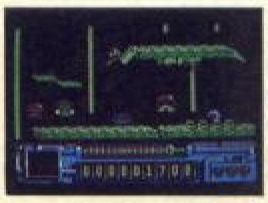
Trendy designer cut off T-Shirt (causes nasty draught round your coils).

Stupid grin, take a quick look in the mirror when playing this game. See what we mean?

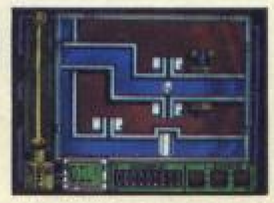
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ZZAP! ED

YOU CAN LEAVE YOUR HAT ON . . .

. . . and welcome to another issue of ZZAP! – arguably the most varied and colourful to date.

Summer has arrived early here in Ludlow, with the sun making an unannounced appearance and mercilessly unleashing its radiation upon our weary brows. Predictably, the heat enticed droves of camera-clad American tourists to fill the streets, and quite unpredictably Julian Rignall recently got engaged to our ever-effervescent Editorial Assistant Glenys Powell. Congratulations are undoubtedly in order.

On a lighter note . . . Budget software appeared in abundance this month, with Firebird's recent deal with Activision/Electric Dreams making all the difference – you can expect to see over two dozen Activision classics making a reappearance within the next month or two, all at £1.99. We won't be **re**-reviewing any titles (*Master Of The Lamps, RMS Titanic* and so on), but we are reviewing titles released before ZZAP! appeared. For example, in this issue there are reviews of *HERO, Decathlon, Pitfall II, River Raid* and *Zenji* – all quality releases, surprising as it may seem. And there's more to follow.

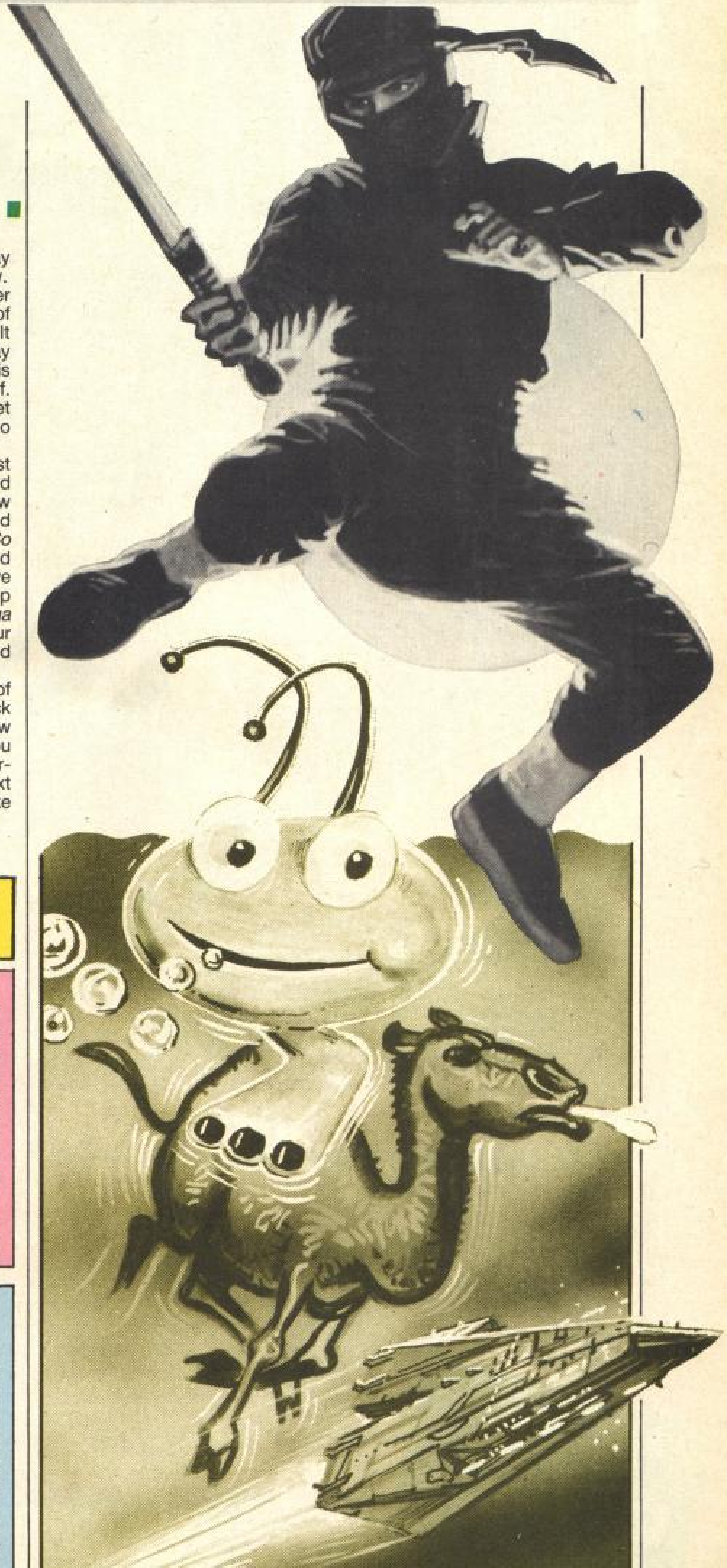
Also from Firebird on the Silver label comes *Zolyx* – a reworking of the old Atari arcade game *Qix*. It doesn't look up to much – and may well be dismissed because of this – but it's addictive beyond belief. Even Lloyd came out of his closet to play – and had to be forced to get back to answering the Rrap.

As for next month . . . First Star's *Spy Vs Spy III* is finished and should be with us in time for review in the next issue – as should Palace Software's *Stifflip And Co* and Ocean's *Mario Brothers* and *Top Gun*. We should also have news on Simon Nicol's follow-up to *Crazy Comets* – entitled *Mega Apocalypse*, and featuring four channel sound with digitised speech. Sounds interesting.

I hope you enjoy the contents of this issue and of the cassette stuck on the front – please let us know what you think, and whether you would like to see a repeat performance later in the year. Until next month then . . . have fun, take care, and keep 'em peeled.

GARY PENN

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GAMES REVIEWED

ADVERTISERS' INDEX



The lack of Sizzlers and especially Gold Medals in recent issues of ZZAP! has occasioned several letters, most on the depressing side, some angry, a few bewildered and questioning what went wrong. But I chose the letter below, from Stuart Wynn, as Letter of the Month, for its optimistic and constructive tone.

The other concern Looming Large is still that of software piracy, and there's a large points-of-view debate this month, following on from the last issue.

GOLD MEDALS, GONE?

LETTER OF THE MONTH

Dear ZZAP!64

In recent editorials for both ZZAP! and CRASH one theme seems to predominate – the market is becoming less innovative, and driven more by advertising than imagination. With no Gold Medals from December until April one doesn't have to read the editorials to get the point. Possibly things are just about to change, unfortunately I doubt it, and look forward with dread to the traditional summer software lull.

Companies promoting tie-ins can argue all they like that the dreaded things sell, but that really isn't the point. Sales in April of however many thousands are never going to make up for the stagnation and market shrinkage of next year. Successful industries dealing in non-necessities must always consider how to benefit and widen the market, rather than simply exploiting it. In a market as precarious as that of computer gaming, the current spate of poor tie-ins seems short-sighted. People who don't read review magazines could very quickly become disillusioned with the whole industry. As for those that do, since Christmas only *The Sentinel* has stood out as genuinely deserving of ten pounds.

What can be done apart from interminable moaning then? A lot, I think. Over Christmas my favourite games were *The Sentinel* and *Alleykat*. Innovative games polished to the nth degree, either programmed especially for the Commodore, or converted with care. It's unlikely that anyone is going to produce too many more brilliant games, but more respectable games might be had by following some simple rules;

1. The rule of Conversions. When making a conversion, aim for good *new* games rather than mindless clones. Follow the example set by *Dan Dare* and *Paradroid/Quazatron*. Rushing out a clone which abuses the new machine's capabilities is a sin against the bigger future market.
2. The rule of Bandwagons. When a game such as *Uridium* is successful, don't rush out the first game you can which looks the same on screenshots. Take time, and take advantage of your programmers' particular talents to produce a better game – perhaps with more strategic elements.
3. The Golden Rule. Do not put out tape versions of disk games without substantial re-programming. In the case of that abomination *Gunship*, many options should be eliminated and missions pre-set, three different pre-set missions on each side of the tape perhaps. As with rule one, the aim is a good game, not impossible cloning. Multi-loads are almost invariably to be regarded as a sin, and avoided.
4. The Rule of Tie-Ins. Never advertise said product until three-quarters finished. Always allow a longer time for tie-in products to be finished, as the programmers are doing a more difficult job. Obviously more time means more money, but with substantial minimum sales guaranteed remember the product is an advertisement for the industry generally, and your software house in particular. A good game should help less hyped products with a similar brand name. Exploitation tie-ins should be regarded as the worst of sins.

Finally, perhaps ZZAP! itself can help. Instead of all this C&VG/Commodore User 'debate' why not turn a few pages over to readers' comments on games. Rather than '17 percent was too low, 19 percent is more like it', these pages should emphasise what readers disliked (besides bad programming) and what game features deserve copying and developing. In the case of otherwise terrible games what innovations deserve to be remembered as worthy of refinement? Should a popular game have a sequel? and what features should be repeated, added or dropped?

More specifically should more shoot 'em ups have 'continue from last death' options, or would password access to higher levels be preferred? How about more strategy elements, for example a choice of game craft, such as in *Trap*. Also, why are games so serious now? In *Zzoom*, for example, one could choose to rescue refugees or massacre them. Computer games should be fun. For once why can't we blow the Earth up rather than interminably rescue the thankless planet?

Finally I'd like to ask what happened to game previews? It seems to me obvious that currently manufacturers are neglecting play-testing, and suffering from 'group-think', ignoring obvious problems. Previews, it seemed to me, entertained readers, promoted products and hopefully gave magazine reviewers a chance to give constructive opinions before it was too late. Possibly during the summer months ZZAP! might preview some more innovative, less hyped products and hopefully improve them while giving free pre-publicity. Also more CRASH-style design-a-game competitions might be useful, possibly less specific in nature and intended for publication as idea stimulus rather than helping one specific software house.

In conclusion then, I think ZZAP! and the readership should at least tell the producers what they want, rather than letting advertising strategies and deadlines dictate everything.

Stuart Wynne, Blacon, Chester

I have very little to add to that, beyond saying that I think Stuart's letter is one of the most constructive and useful ZZAP! Rrap letters I've ever received. I hope his comments will open up the debate further on the nature of 64 games, what readers expect of them, and what the role of ZZAP! should be in relation to software development. Stuart, your £30 worth of software will be on its way as soon as you let us know what you would like.

LM

ZZAP! RRAP

A LOUD RASPBERRY

Dear Lloyd,
I'd like to bet that if the average ZZAP! 64 reader was to be perfectly honest, we would find that, apart from the odd dickhead here and there, most of them buy or look at both ZZAP! and Commodore User. Both magazines are a damn good read, and together they offer a wealth of information, playing tips, pokes, previews etc. It's nigh-on impossible for one magazine to cover the entire spectrum (sorry for using a swear word) of events concerning the mighty 64, and this, coupled with the fact that the two magazines are released at different times of the month, means that a blinkered, biased reader of only one of the mega mags can miss out on some exciting developments concerning their machine.

So I would like to take this opportunity to blow a large raspberry to all ZZAP! readers who say CU is crap and vice versa. Personally, I think that Commodore owners are lucky to have two monthly magazines of such quality covering their machines; I'm sure that owners of less trendy micros would love to be in our position!

Now on to more serious matters. It is now becoming obvious that when a software house has a hit game all the others jump on the bandwagon and produce their own versions, hence we, the buyers, are bombarded with hun-

The software piracy debate (Treason On The High Seas) sparked off a predictable response. It's interesting to see that, by and large, people's views break down into three camps: the 'innocent' copier with 'friends' who blames the cost of software; the unrepentant pirate and proud of it (with overtones of Robin Hood – 'I do it as a political protest because it's the software houses who are really the robbers'); and the honest man who sees theft in any form as degrading and dishonourable.

One of the latter is **Robert Stevens** *from Exeter in Devon, who is very angry.*

Aaargh! I've just punched the wall to vent my anger over the attitude of the pirates who read your magazine.

I am 19 and currently unemployed. I would love to have a great big expensive stereo with a CD player and perfect speakers. I can, in no way, afford such a luxury. Does that mean I can walk into Dixons, pick one up and stroll out again? I'm damned if it does!

Some people don't agree though, and reckon at heart we're all pirates. **Aubrey Yoe**, *also from Devon, doesn't want us to . . .*

. . . sit on top of pedestals and turn your nose up at pirates as if we were a disease, because I'm sure that most of you have taped songs off the radio (and don't say it's different because it's not), and people who live in glass houses shouldn't throw stones.

Ah yes . . . the old excuse, although Aubrey Yoe refrains from pointing out that airtime usually includes a deejay ruining the start of every record for that very reason. And it isn't valid to call something 'theft' but excuse it by saying that in another form, everyone does it. However Aubrey Yoe does more . . .

I am a pirate and a proud one. I'm a member of a very large games ring. Some members of which I've never seen, and so I often obtain games from a friend of a friend. We all know that piracy is illegal but none of us would pass as thieves and we would not consider ourselves as so . . .

. . . interesting – you know it's illegal, yet you don't pass as thieves? But Aubrey Yoe has a defence . . .

Most of you think that we sell games – none of us have ever done so and none of us ever would, no matter what the asking price. We do however copy £1.99 games and don't consider this as 'low' pirating. We copy anything and everything for anybody as long as we're sure they're a 'safe bet'. Our games ring is growing steadily and would only stop if the chances of getting caught were greater. At the moment I consider it at a level of 1:1,000,000, and to my relief I can think of no way of bringing it down.

I see. It's illegal to copy games, but as long as you only give them away and don't sell them, it isn't theft. In much the same way as the art collector who steals the Mona Lisa because he only wants to hang it on his private wall and not re-sell it isn't really stealing. Quite. Except that you are robbing, or aiding the theft of money from other people. **Peter Jones** *from Mirrosoft's Product Department offers a personal view of how a worker for a software house sees arguments like Aubrey Yoe's . . .*

Another way to look at the home pirating is that although it may not affect someone directly linked to the pirate himself, it does cut the profits made by a company and so the salaries in the company are lower. How would you like it if someone you did not know was taking your pay or pocket money before you got a chance to use it? No matter how many excuses pirates comes up with, they are breaking the law, unless they have the permission of the software house to make a back up. Copyright on anything lasts for up to 50 years after the death of the copyright holder. If users cannot afford to buy a game then why do they not save up for it? Games can still be bought after their initial release. This is tantamount to stealing a hi-fi system that you cannot afford at that moment in time. Do you do that?

And **Robert Stevens** *insists Aubrey Yoe's is . . .*

. . . a feeble excuse to pirate and steal and I'd like to see them in court. When I purchased my Commodore 64 I did so on hire purchase. For six months I had only £4 a month to spend, yet not once did I resort to piracy and steal a computer.

It's nice to know there are some honest people around, but **Iain Clement** *from Basingstoke, Hants doesn't apply the piracy code to beat high priced software, he also reckons you can get your hardware through software piracy.*

We regularly read complaints from cassette owners about software houses producing disk-based games and the fact that most of ZZAP!'s reviews seem to be of disk games. Surely if an owner can afford to buy a 64 then a disk-drive should not be out of their reach. Cassettes were not intended to store computer games, but provide a cheap and easy way of doing so and if you own ten such cassette games, well that could have been your disk drive paid for.

Alternatively if you receive ten pirated copies of games and put away the pennies you would have spent . . . hey presto! enough cash for a disk drive.

Iain Clement's dubious system springs from a belief that 64 piracy has a lot to do with the interface between cassette and disk games, as he explains . . .

I've been reading ZZAP! for some years now, and would not consider buying a game unless I'd first read the review; however I recently upgraded from a 64 to a 128 with disk drive and had the misfortune to buy *Footballer Of The Year*, and have since blanked the disk to use for pirated games.

I enjoyed your balanced debate on piracy, but one point which failed to turn up was the satisfaction one gets when receiving a disk/tape with a few games on it, all of which are just so much crap. (I say 'satisfaction' because you immediately think 'Good God' I could have bought that!).

And there we are again, back to the 'I blame the software house' approach. In fact Iain Clement has created an entire philosophy from it . . .

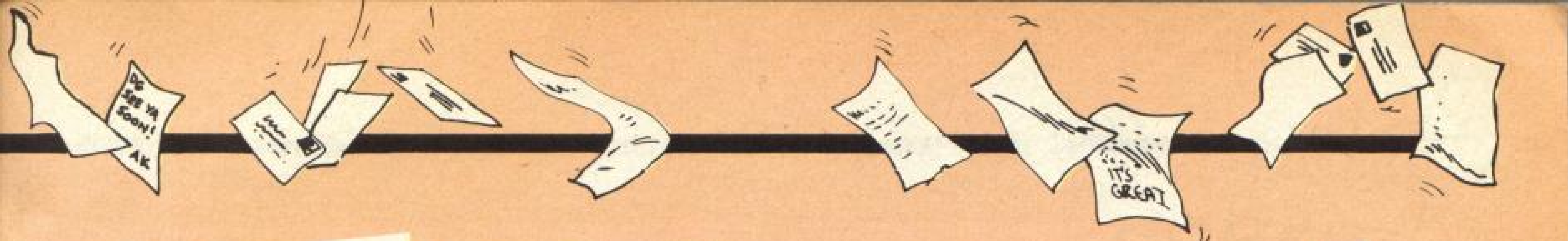
I get immense satisfaction in ripping off software houses which produce rubbish and sit back to rake in the profits; if I can reduce these profits by providing pirated copies of their rubbish, then I'm quite happy. So long as software houses keep producing rot like *Footballer Of The Year* I will continue to receive/turn out copies of their mega-hit rubbish.

It's a widespread belief, obviously, that piracy is actually sponsored by software houses putting out poor games. On the one hand there's the above argument – that if they do then they deserve to be ripped off – and there's the somewhat more honest approach that says, if they do, then can I trust spending my money on an unknown, but probably not very good, quantity? **Adrian Lowery** *from Lancashire reckons that . . .*

. . . when the software industry stops treating its customers like dogs treat lampposts it might earn some respect. Nine out of every ten games released are not worth the price of the blank tape they are put on. Adverts are blatantly intended to mislead the customer and take £10 off him/her for what is really a banal piece of 'entertainment'. Anything under the arcade conversion/official license film or TV tie-in heading is almost certainly doorstep material. Without doubt a tremendous amount of piracy takes place because people don't know if their £10.00 will be thrown away (even if they can afford it) on a piece of trash.

There is far too much moral this and immoral that – far more relevant is human psychology.

Commercial psychology is also a factor. And isn't that where the magazines attempt to provide the equivalent of 'airplay' for records? **Robert Stevens** *again . . .*



dreds of Karate, *Gauntlet* or scrolling shoot 'em up games for months after the original (and usually the best) version was a hit.

I think that a journal of the high standing of ZZAP! could well help Britain's gamers escape the dreaded clone syndrome.

Why not get your educated têtes together and concoct some kind of questionnaire together for us humble readers to fill in and send your findings to one of the mega games writing houses like Epyx.
N Smith, Chesterfield, Derbyshire

It's certainly true that without a bit of competition, magazines tend to get complacent, and I'm pleased to say that CU do offer a bit of competition now and again. And after that appallingly patronising statement I'll hurriedly cough and turn to your other point; it would be useful to know what other ZZAP! readers think of the 'bandwaggon' games. I'm not too sure that the official, or the first out, is always the best. Perhaps a nice debating point next issue, huh?
LM

One purpose of review magazines such as ZZAP! is to give people a fair appraisal of a wide range of games to aid them in selecting the best one possible on which to spend their meagre funds.

The games player obviously has less money to spend than any company, but meagre funds are a relative business, and even large companies have to be careful about what they spend and when. Profit seems to be a dirty word among the Robin Hood pirates who see their role as one of retribution against software houses who attempt to make profits – the opposite side of the coin being that they do it by putting out dreadful product designed to rip off the buyer. Then there's the age-old argument that piracy doesn't really affect the software houses' profits anyway, although **Seb Geddes** *from Dunbeath, Caithness believes that if . . .*

Mr X swaps one of his games (original or a copy) for someone else's game, then copies it, swaps back, this means 50 percent of a software house's profits are being lost if only originals are used, but if copies are being swapped then this doesn't have an infinite snowballing effect that denies software houses a vast amount of money.

No, but if there are loads of copies floating around, then many others who may have purchased a game end up getting a copy. **Adrian Lowery**, *however, doesn't even agree about that potential 50 percent loss . . .*

Software companies lose out when a person copies a game only assuming that, had the person NOT copied the game he would have gone out and bought it. I would say the following is more common. A person cannot afford a game which he would like, so he copies it from a friend who has the game. If that same person was not able to do this he would have done without the game. This applies to me. Over two years I've copied about 20 games. Had I not been able to do this I simply would not have had the games. The software companies have not lost a penny because of my copying. This must be a very common situation.

So far we've mostly heard from buyers (or pirates) of games. Here's **Peter Jones** *again, from Mirrorsoft's Product Department. He adds that his letter is a personal view, taken from the experience of working within a software house.*

Many users do not realise the amount of work that goes into producing a program. Many programs can take around three to four months to produce, during which time advertising, advance payments and so on must be paid for. Advertising in magazines is quite expensive. If a company is licensing a product then it has to pay fees. These and other expenses go towards making up the final cost of the game. The final life of the game may only be for a few months, and each new product, these days, must have new techniques, making the development time longer and thus more expensive. Finally on the commercial side, the return a software house gains from each unit sold is fairly minimal as the distributors and dealers must be taken into account.

Finally, and echoing Peter's words, **Seb Geddes** *speaks for me when he says . . .*

Virtually everyone is copying games because of high prices – why are they so high? Because everyone is copying games – the infamous vicious circle.

What if software houses were to lower prices? They would have to really mass produce their games because of the small profit margins (because of yours truly, the guy with the parrot on his shoulder and the wooden leg) which would mean a lowering in game quality and standard, which is definitely NOT what we want. So here's the basic message: IT'S DOWN TO US TO STOP COPYING – NOW!

If we don't prices will rise further, making the temptation to copy or buy copies EVEN GREATER.

No doubt we haven't heard the last about piracy – that's the only thing you can say for certain about the subject . . .
LM

ANYTHING YOU CAN DO . . .

Dear Lloyd
Let me tell you a story. About 50 or 60 years ago people released fairly simple songs. Gradually the songs developed into more complex ones as techniques were improved. Then one day the ideas cupboard was empty, so people started reverting to 'tarting up' old songs, producing songs with little originality, and only a handful of bands recording original songs.

Does this story sound familiar? Of course it does. The computer game industry is going the same way. Simple games developed into more complex games until now all we get is clones of clones, or arcade conversions with few original games.

I think, and others will probably agree, that this is a sad state for both industries. In my opinion all the software houses are doing is saying 'Anything they can do, we can do better', without really trying anything new just because it isn't an arcade conversion or a game without a big character, such as *He-Man*. If all this doesn't change we might as well kiss the classic game goodbye.
Steven Richardson, Witton Gilbert, Durham

Your analogy is a little spurious, Steven. For a start, there's a good deal of difference in the relative sizes of the popular music business and the computer games software industry. But perhaps the most important distinction is that music engages the emotions very directly. That is the best reason why old songs are rearranged, used again and re-recorded. The worst, as you suggest, is paucity of imagination, talent and ability. It seems to me that such an accusation can be aimed at any facet of the entertainment business, a marketplace where big fortunes are to be made (and lost), and where hype is seen as essential. I don't think drawing an analogy between music and games is very valid at this level.
LM



THE LOST MAP

Dear Lloyd,
As I handed over my one pound, I quickly flicked through the pages of last month's ZZAP!, and was quite impressed with what I saw.
When I got home I investigated further and noticed an unusual feature, a 3D map. Great I thought, but as I went to carve up those pages containing the fabulous map, I realised that if I was to do so I would ruin all of the other pages containing wonderful tips. Wasn't this a rather stupid place to put the map? If you are to produce more 3D maps (and I hope that you do) please could you print them on the back of advertisements? I'm sure that other readers will agree with me.
D Playle, Stevenage, Herts

I'm sure they would agree with you, but life isn't as simple as that. Advertisers don't like booking ads on pages that are actually designed to be ripped out and cut up! At least, we try and avoid it if possible. Still, if there are to be more 3D maps, we'll try and accommodate your wishes if it's at all possible.
LM

BETTER GAMES PLEASE

Dear Lloyd,
I think ZZAP! is good, but it could be improved in the following ways:

1. Get better reviewers because the ratings given to all the brill games are pathetic.
2. Add another rating like Joystick Wear because games that use power sync break the joystick after a few goes.
3. Pick some better games to review. The games that you had in the last issue were *rubbish*.
4. Put the coupons on a separate sheet at the back because I cut up the reviews when I send off for things.

Apart from these the mag is ACE.
Adrian Kingsten, Maen-Y-Groes, Dyfed

Do you mean you didn't agree with the level of ratings given 'to all the brill games', or do you mean because they're the best rated in an issue they should automatically receive higher percentages? And if either of those questionable statements is what you really meant, does that mean we need new reviewers? As for reviewing RUBBISH – what absolute nonsense! Games don't get reviewed because they're either good or bad, they get reviewed because they're being released for sale!
LM

A CLEANER PENN

To Lloyd (Winston) Mangram
I must thank Oli for preserving my eyesight by redrawing the facial features of GP, whose old profile piccy was getting on my nerves. The new drawings are a lot cleaner and are quite amusing.
I'm glad, too, old GP has been left out of a fair amount of the reviews in issue 24 because he is, in my opinion very unfair in his comments. I know they're only guidelines, but all the same even guidelines shouldn't involve the slagging off of a game which is in fact very good, like *Tomahawk* for instance. He may not like simulations, but his thinking should be unbiased towards any particular genre. Everyone else thought it was good except Gary. I thought the game was good, certainly not so bad as to compare it to something which wasn't even a proper simulation (*Super Huey*).
The opinions about games should be approached as if they were original – original in the sense that a game is different to other simulators in one way or another.
I've noticed other reviews done in the wrong way by others apart from GP, it's just that he seems to do it with the majority of games. If you approached each game as I have stated then the reviews might be a little more realistic when compared to readers' opinions.
I know you must get through a lot of games which are similar in some respects, but each has its own little extras which should be used to make each review different, so readers don't get fed up with the constant moaning about 'vertical and horizontal games.'
Now staying on issue 24, I must say that we have a very funny person in our midst by the name of Andrew Braybrook. Ha ha Mister Braybrook, let's get lots of loyal fans to painfully slave over a hot computer typing out a listing to double the speed of any computer game and finally and triumphantly try to load in a slow game only to be confronted by April Fool – beast! Actually I needed cheering up and I did laugh at the idea (only a little), but I forgive you for leading us on, although I got my ZZAP! on the 12th of March.
Now I've got that out of my system I would like to congratulate you Lloyd on your handling of Jack Diamond's 'review of the day' candidate – I think not. I mean what a prat, thinking he could replace our merry bunch of whacky reviewers, with a substandard, poor quality gang of reviewers chosen by a competition. I certainly wouldn't get the issue in which they reviewed. The ZZAP! mob have a lot of experience behind them, and can give a good game a well thought out review, with information which could help a decision to buy a game. So I think it's a big NO WAY!! to Jack Diamond and his reviewing dream.
About *Gunship*; I thought you were unfair on the cassette version. I have it and the so-called 20-minute multi-load was a bit of an anti-cassette campaign. The loader *is* on the long side but for what you get the result is worth the wait. And what about the ratings, what were you doing? How can you give what is potentially helicopter simulator of the year (in my opinion it's the best ever done) lower marks on cassette than on disk, considering the only things that should be affected by multi-load are presentation and hookability? To say 'grossly over-priced' is very heavy handed. Anyway, to a dedicated simulation freak a multi-load is soon forgotten, as you can go make a nice cuppa while side B loads in, or have another read of the manual to pick up tips. I think that *Gunship* deserved an overall rating of at least 80 percent.
About the letters page, it seems to be getting a little limited in subject range recently. The majority of letters are good but there are a few which are still stir up a lot of rubbish about magazines. I think it's stupid, because ZZAP! is obviously above that sort of thing – unlike C&VG which persists in slagging off rival publications (like any from Ludlow which was recently referred to as 'Mudhole'). Please don't waste Lloyd's time with this sort of unwanted waffle.
Steven Hunter, Weston-Super-Mare, Avon

It is a bit hard to be objective about game genres which you dislike, although having said that, I agree with you that reviewers should attempt to be fair, or find reviewers who do like the particular type. Gary insists, however, that his remarks about Tomahawk *were not related to a dislike of simulations.*
Had you been in my cottage in Ludlow during the heavy rains of early April, you would have known that C&VG's remarks about 'Mudhole' were the literal truth – but the poor little lambs don't always recognise that while there may be literacy in truth, there isn't necessarily truth in literacy.
LM

Dear Lloyd,
Being an avid Andrew Braybrook fan, on receiving April's issue of ZZAP!, I turned madly to the latest installment of his Mental Procreation, saga. At the end of this month's chunk of his diary I saw a listing the length of my arm. 'Just key in the program and save it to tape or disk, RUN it and then NEW it. Finally load in any game from cassette. Once loaded it will run at up to double normal speed', it said. Double normal speed? I asked myself. But if that's what Andrew says . . .
An hour and a half saw me typing it in madly and then debugging it. Another quarter of an hour saw me choosing which of my games to try this epic program on.
All I can say is having seen the result I was really peed off. But now come to think of it, it must go down as a classic April fool.
Nice one ZZAP! You fooled me hook, line and sinker!
Rahul Joshi, London NW10

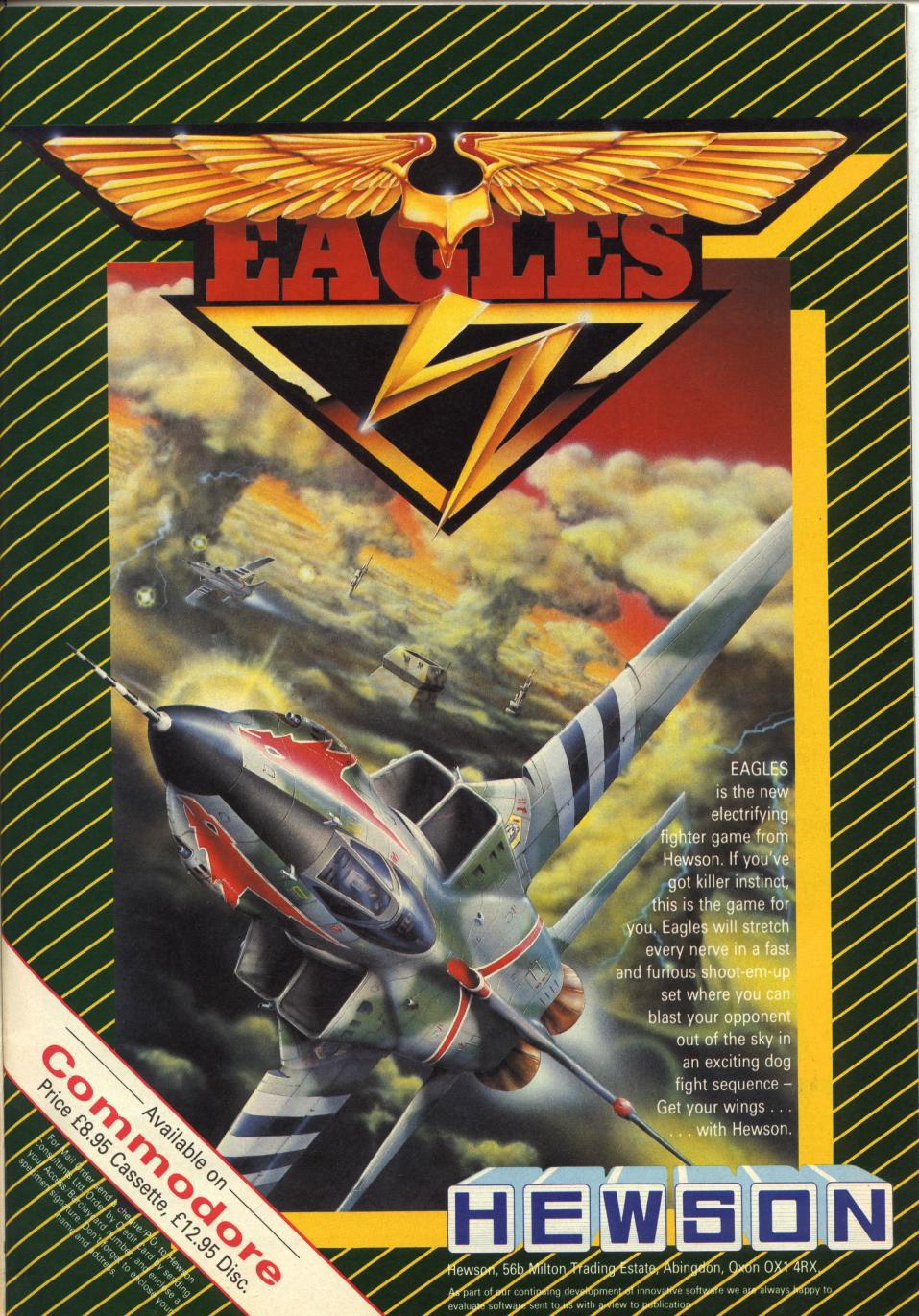
No, no, Rahul, it must have been a setting error. Andrew Braybrook wouldn't do a thing like that, would he? Okay, perhaps he would!
LM

PENPALS

Hi Lloyd,
Glad to see the penpal section. I would like a penpal and it seems as though ZZAP! gets all over the world. I'm male, but female penpals are welcome. So how's about all you budding penpals out there putting pen to paper and dropping us a line.
M Nelson, 24 Melbourne Avenue, Newtown, Birmingham, B19 2HY

Dear Lloyd
I would like a penpal who's got a Commodore 64 or a Vic 20. I am a boy of 14 years.
Chris Allinson, 30 Salisbury Road, Barry, South Glamorgan, South Wales, CF6 8PE

Okay, I'm off, back up the hill to take advantage of the fine weather to get some seedlings potted out, and to get away from a game that's been driving me mad, the wonderful *Zolyx* from Firebird. It's been on the screen in editorial for days, and I can't resist it. If you've got anything to say, get off your chest, yell from a soap-box or confess, the address hasn't changed: ZZAP! RRAP, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB



EAGLES
EAGLES is the new electrifying fighter game from Hewson. If you've got killer instinct, this is the game for you. Eagles will stretch every nerve in a fast and furious shoot-em-up set where you can blast your opponent out of the sky in an exciting dog fight sequence – Get your wings . . . . . . with Hewson.
Available on
Commodore
Price £8.95 Cassette, £12.95 Disc.
For Mail Order send a cheque/P.O. to Hewson Consultants Ltd. Order by Credit Card by sending your Access/Barclaycard number, and enclose a specimen signature. Don't forget to enclose your name and address.
HEWSON
Hewson, 56b Milton Trading Estate, Abingdon, Oxon OX1 4RX.
As part of our continuing development of innovative software we are always happy to evaluate software sent to us with a view to publication.

ZENJI

Firebird/Activision, £1.99 cass only, joystick only

● A simplistic, but highly addictive puzzle game with an oriental flavour





Oh dear, time has run out – and lens person Cameron was so close to completing the screen!

Puzzle games are still few and far between on the 64 – fortunately, Firebird have gone some way towards rectifying this situation by re-releasing this old Activision favourite.

The screen depicts a series of blue and yellow hexagons, connected by grey, maze-like sections of track. You control a 'face', starting from the green centre segment (source) and guiding it along the tracks.

A section of track on which the face rests can be rotated about its centre – 90 degrees at a time. Turning different sections in this way alters the layout of the maze, and any section of track that connects directly to the source is turned green. The ultimate aim is to rearrange the maze so that it becomes one unbroken track and therefore turns completely green.

Accomplishing this task within a set time limit rewards you with the next, more difficult level.

Later mazes are inhabited by flames, scurrying around emitting sparks – contact with either resulting in the loss of a face. The screen is then restarted from the centre, with the maze layout remaining as it was when left, saving the trouble of starting from scratch.

Segments containing numbers hold a bonus, collected by crossing the segment before the digits count down to zero. This is added to your scoreline, and at the end of the game sufficiently high scores are entered into the high-score table.

Hello there. I've just been playing this fabulous offbeat treat for the senses called Zenji**. It's simple in concept, incredibly addictive and hellishly difficult to put down. It's pleasant to the ears and eyes and is brilliantly designed. What is it? Well, it's** *the* **best puzzle game ever. Think of it – in billions of years of history there has never been anything better . . . amazing! Even more amazing is that it costs only two pounds. Buy it and believe it.**



While most puzzle games are maddeningly frustrating, Zenji **has a relaxing, almost theraputic effect. The concept is gloriously simple and the execution is simply glorious. I particularly like the way that if you try too hard to see the solution to a screen, you only get confused and more often than not everything goes drastically wrong. I'm not sure why it has oriental overtones, but it doesn't matter –** Zenji **is immensely playable, grossly addictive and temptingly cheap.**



A decent puzzle game makes a nice break from blasting aliens, and Zenji **is probably the best on the 64. The levels are nicely graded to become progressively more challenging, but still retain enough playability on the earlier levels to avoid that 'Oh no, I've got to play through the first screens again' feeling. The graphics are simple but totally effective, with the music also adding an enormous amount, getting faster as the time limit approaches. This induces a sensation of increasing panic, even if you're doing alright! I'm totally hooked – I think you will be too.**



PRESENTATION 91%
Superbly presented, and very user-friendly with neat touches throughout.

GRAPHICS 67%
Very simplistic, but totally functional.

SOUND 63%
Average but atmospheric tune.

HOOKABILITY 92%
An unusual concept which captures the imagination and is remarkably easy and enjoyable to grasp.

LASTABILITY 89%
Will still be around when others are discarded.

VALUE 97%
An awful lot of enjoyment for the lowest possible price.

OVERALL 91%
Easily the cheapest and best puzzle game to date.



NEMESIS THE WARLOCK

Martech, £8.95 cass, joystick with keys

The very latest in licensing deals finds Martech transforming 2000 AD's *Nemesis The Warlock* from pen and ink into pixels.

Defeating evil is the name of the game, and taking the part of Nemesis, the idea is to stop Thomas de Torquemada by infiltrating his bastille. Not an easy trick that, as Torquemada's deranged fanatics are on the loose. Being a sensitive, socially aware type of superhero, the warlock finds that the only way to get to the heart of the problem is to hack a few minions to bits. Not that Nemesis needs to hack them apart with his bare hooves – equipped with a swinging sword, venemous acid spit (look out Jan Leeming) and a death dealing firearm, our hero blows 'em away with the best of them.

A single platform-filled screen is the backing for the big man's heroic exploits. Killing an alloted number of denizens opens the passageway to the next level – however, this doorway is not obvious and must be found. As the corpses pile up it's possible, and sometimes necessary, to use them as stepping stones to new heights.

Ammunition is collected, and sent in the general direction of the enemy by pressing the fire button. When the supply is exhausted, the fire button activates a head-cleaving sword.

A panel at the bottom of the screen shows the amount of ammunition remaining, the required number of terminators to be terminated, and a particularly gruesome depiction of a hand slowly squeezing a heart. This bloody graphic relates to Nemesis' strength, and each time he comes into contact with a terminator the hand squeezes a little tighter – eventually wringing all of the warlock's life blood and thereby ending the game.

A visage of Torquemada slowly appears at the bottom right hand corner of the screen and dictates his spiritual presence. This effects his minion's fanaticism, so that even after disembowelment, Torquemada's goons are often prone to transformation into scythe-wielding Zombies.

New hazards threaten our hero as he progresses through the levels – flying swords appear and bottomless pits open, waiting for a careless warlock to slip.

Torquemada's terminators are fanatical in their quest to purify the universe – so be pure, be vigilant . . . but most of all BEHAVE!



2000 AD fans are getting a bit of a raw deal with regards to decent binary interpretations of their cult characters, and Nemesis the Warlock is no exception. Martech have taken a simple hack 'em up theme and dropped the characters in wholesale, rather than study the storylines from the comic and build a game around them. From a licensing point of view this game fails completely, but viewed as it comes, it makes a terribly good shoot 'n' slash game. There's loads of action and the effect of Terminators being blown across the screen is great. Interest may wane fairly quickly, but until then, go get 'em!

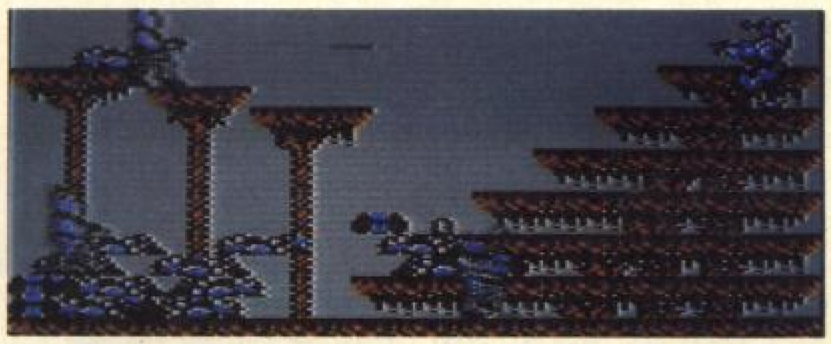


As hack 'em ups go this has to be one of the most grisly and violent. There's something very appealing about slaying sprite after sprite in this fashion. Perhaps it's the satisfying thud of sword and lead against pixel, or perhaps the subsequent dead corpse flying across the screen due to impact of the weapon on their insides. Whatever the appeal, it offers a couple of weeks of bloody good fun and is well worth looking out for. The only sad thing is that these days companies think that they need a licence to sell any sort of product. Personally, I think it's a gross waste of development money and if a program is as much fun as this I couldn't give a toss what I'm killing.

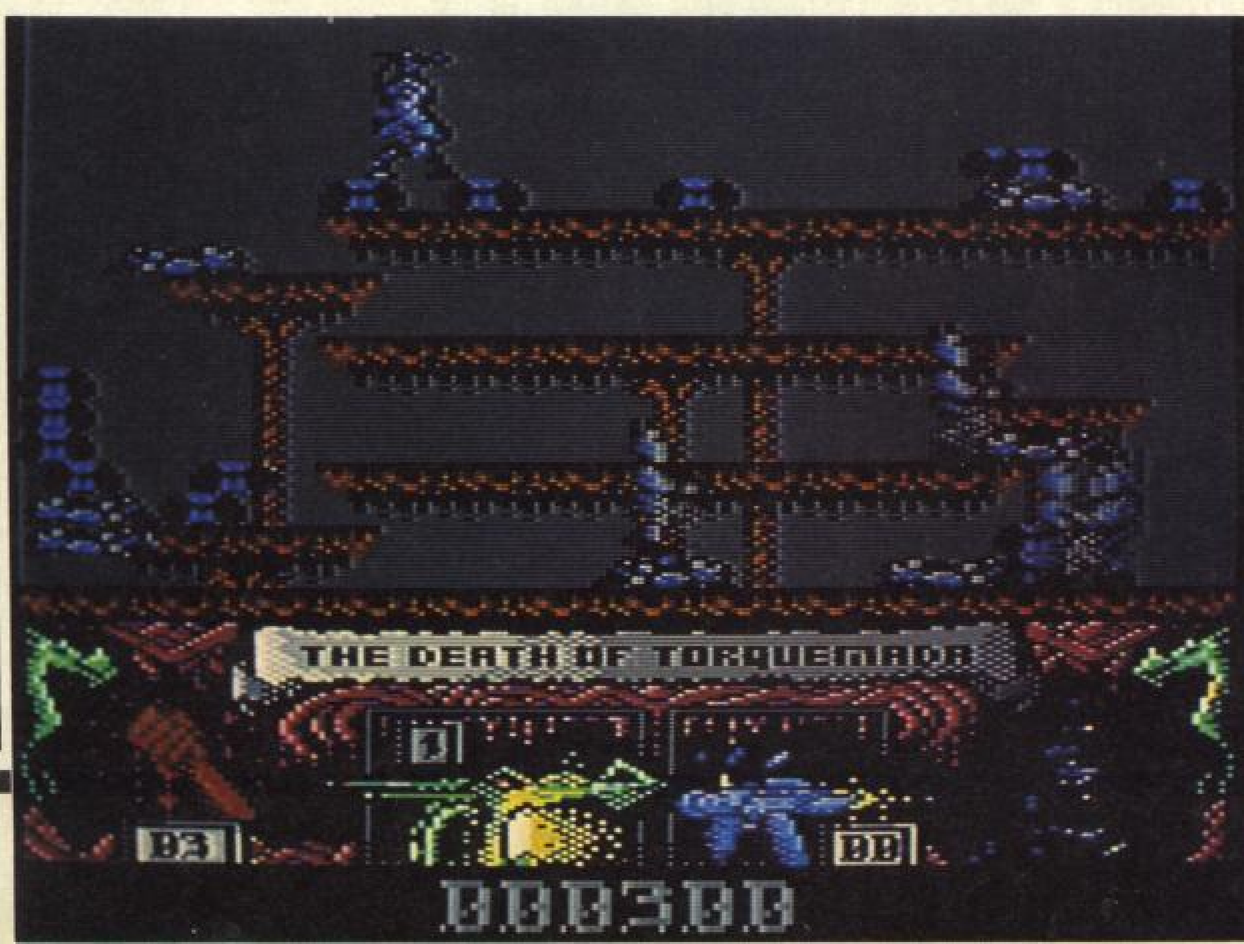


This isn't particularly marvellous, but it still captures some of the comic strip's atmosphere. There are certain aspects which occasionally interfere with the action, such as not being able to shoot the terminators at close range, Nemesis' plodding pace and the fact that it is impossible to shoot and move simultaneously. Still, the action feels wonderful – hacking and slaying, drawing and firing, seeing the terminators recoil when hit and watching the corpses pile up . . . gratification beyond belief!

And the body count rises . . . the Warlock lets rip with his death dealing weapon on Screen Two



With only three of Torquemada's followers left to despatch, Nemesis stands proud at the top of the first screen



PRESENTATION 87%
Competent in most aspects.

GRAPHICS 81%
The screen surrounds, definition and animation are beautiful, which is more than can be said for the garish colour scheme that confuses the backdrops and sprites.

SOUND 82%
Atmospheric and inspired title tune and sparse but suitably powerful spot effects.

HOOKABILITY 77%
Simplistic, aggressive and enjoyable shoot 'em up action tainted by a few minor flaws.

LASTABILITY 57%
Not enough variety or long term challenge, but fun to pick up and play any time.

VALUE 68%
It's unfortunate that the price funds an unnecessary licence.

OVERALL 72%
A waste of a potentially useful licence, but a gratifying romp of binary violence.

TEST

GODS AND HEROES

Power House, £1.99 cass, joystick only

L its predecessor, *Hercules, Gods And Heroes* a 50 screen platform game. The player takes control of Hercules, guiding him around the screens in search of prizes. The hero walks left or right and moves vertically by jumping or climbing up and down ropes.

Vile creatures inhabit the platforms and make the task even trickier by roaming about on a preset course, removing one of Hercules' three lives on contact. Some static objects (stars and little plants for example) are also deadly to the touch. Just to make things worse, booby-trapped platforms pose problems by either disappearing or bursting into flames as soon as Hercules sets foot on them.



Occasionally the prize seems impossible to reach, but jumping into space sometimes makes a platform appear, allowing what was thought to be an inaccessible part of the screen to be reached. Springboards also help our hero to reach the parts that other heroes can't reach.

Having collected a prize, Hercules automatically progresses to the next screen. A useful option is that when the game ends Hercules can carry on from the screen he left off at by using the option on the title screen.

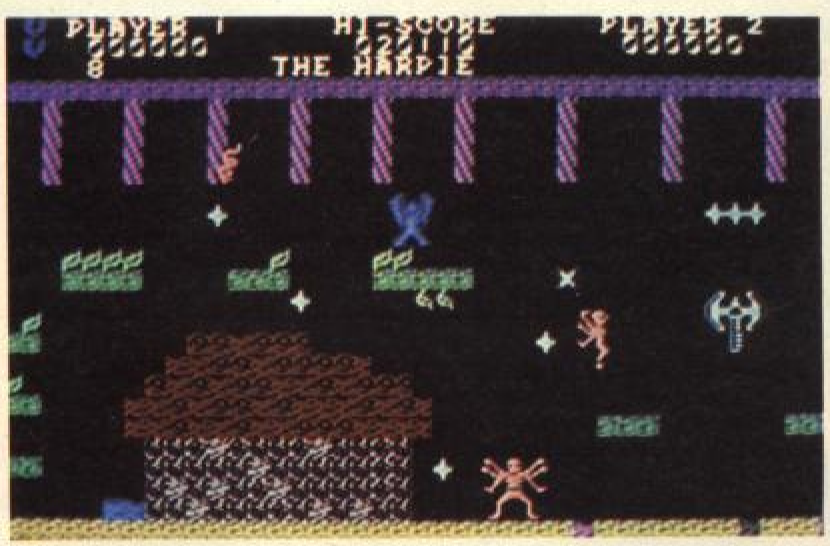


▲ If only big 'H' can reach the ball and chain, he'll live to fight on . . . until the next screen at least!



Now this is a decent platform game. No pretentions to being anything big, commercial and boring – Gods And Heroes is simple, immensely frustrating but playable. Most of the screens have been superbly thought out and are both difficult and rewarding to complete. It's just so good – in many ways better than Hercules, and certainly a lot more addictive than any recent releases of this type. It looks dire, and will probably be overlooked because of this, but if you consider yourself an ardent platform fan you can't give it a miss and expect your conscience to allow you to get away with it.

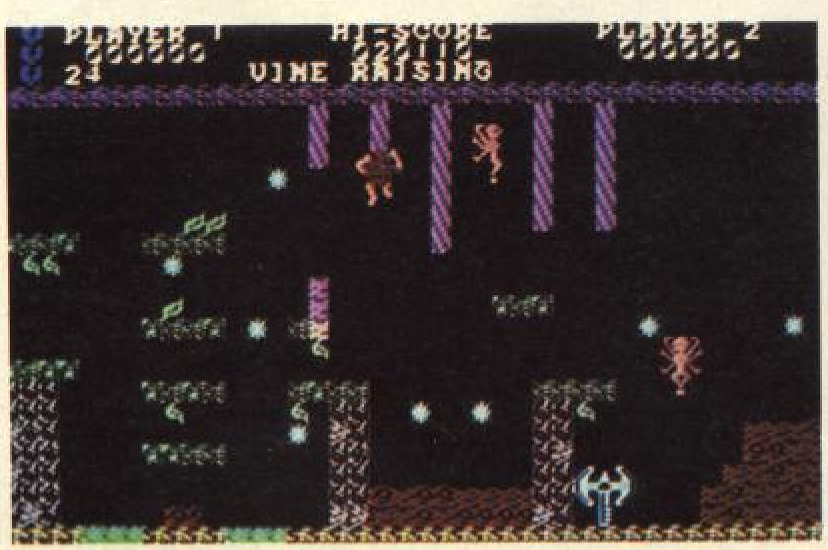
▼ Dangling lifelessly from one of the vines at the top, it looks like Hercules has just shuffled off this mortal coil





This game is easily described in one word – incrediblyfrustratingbutplayable. It is the type of maddeningly addictive program that drives people to distraction (or is it destruction?). Gods And Heroes is a graphical travesty, but it incorporates plenty of scope and the urge to complete a scene is quite strong. Fans of Hercules should go loopy over Gods And Heroes, but not falling into this category, I wasn't absolutely convinced of its merits. The borderline between frustration and annoyance is a fine one . . . tread carefully.

▼ Swinging from vine to vine – Hercules plays Tarzan in order to get to the axe at the bottom





Bad news I'm afraid, platform fanatics. The follow up to Hercules is just as tricky, just as frustrating and just as addictive as its predecessor – Arrgh! Collecting the prizes involves negotiating some incredibly devilish hazards, and just when you think you've found a clear path . . . the platform bursts into flame under your feet! The graphics and sound are a complete and utter joke, but the playability passes with flying colours. There's even a free copy of Robobolt on the other side – the unbelievably grotty game which was awarded the lowest ever ZZAP! rating. Now you've got two reasons to go out and buy.

PRESENTATION 84%
Variable game speed, music on/off and you can start on any of the 50 screens.

GRAPHICS 30%
Grotty, with poor definition and use of colour.

SOUND 28%
A crude tune plays throughout, but mercifully it can be switched off.

HOOKABILITY 81%
Instantly addictive and challenging, but unbelievably frustrating.

LASTABILITY 88%
Solving the fifty tricky screens is extremely difficult, but highly rewarding.

VALUE 92%
A genuine bargain – especially with *Robobolt* on the other side.

OVERALL 84%
An excellent platform game which offers plenty for those willing to persevere.



SIZZLER

ZOLYX

Firebird, £1.99 cass, joystick only

● A simplistic, but phenomenally addictive game loosely based on the arcade classic Qix

Zolyx is a spot who lives in a black rectangular arena bordered by a thin blue line. His life is a dangerous one as he is constantly troubled by two sorts of renegade spots – the type which bounce around inside the walls of the arena, and another sort which run around the arena border. The only way to survive their deadly touch is to keep on the move – and this is where problems arise.

Zolyx can move around the arena perimeter quite happily, but is eventually bound to crash into one of the border-occupying spots. It seems obvious then, for Zolyx to travel into the empty arena – but unfortunately it's not that simple. The trouble starts when Zolyx enters the arena – he leaves a yellow line behind him wherever he goes, which isn't very nice because if a spot crashes into the line Zolyx loses one of his five lives. Further still, once Zolyx starts to create a line he can't stop – doing so means death . . .

There is some good news however. When Zolyx gets back to the arena perimeter the area enclosed is filled in blue – allowing Zolyx to move anywhere within. Further intrusions into the renegade spot space, and successful retreats to safety, result in enemy territory slowly being filled in, and more coming under control of Zolyx.

Sometimes a pair of spots may be split. In this case neither area is filled because each one is occupied by a spot – consequently Zolyx has to eat away at both areas to reduce the spot's superiority.

Our spotty hero has one trick up his sleeve. When an enemy threatens either himself or his yellow line, a quick press of the fire button reverses the paths of the belligerent pixels. This facility is available once on the first level, twice on the second, and so on ad nauseum . . .

A constantly updating numerical display at the top of the screen shows the percentage of the playing area that Zolyx has claimed. When the heroic spot has reclaimed over 75% of the arena the screen clears to show an empty arena, filled with even more renegade spots, and Zolyx is forced to start to build up his territory again . . .



Full price games are certainly coming under severe attack from the budget sector these days, and Zolyx merely continues the trend. It is without doubt the most addictive game I've played for months, and I personally had to confiscate everyone else's joystick to give myself long enough to review the damn thing. Apart from a limited variety between screens, I have no real reservations in recommending that you go straight out and buy this game – it's tremendous.

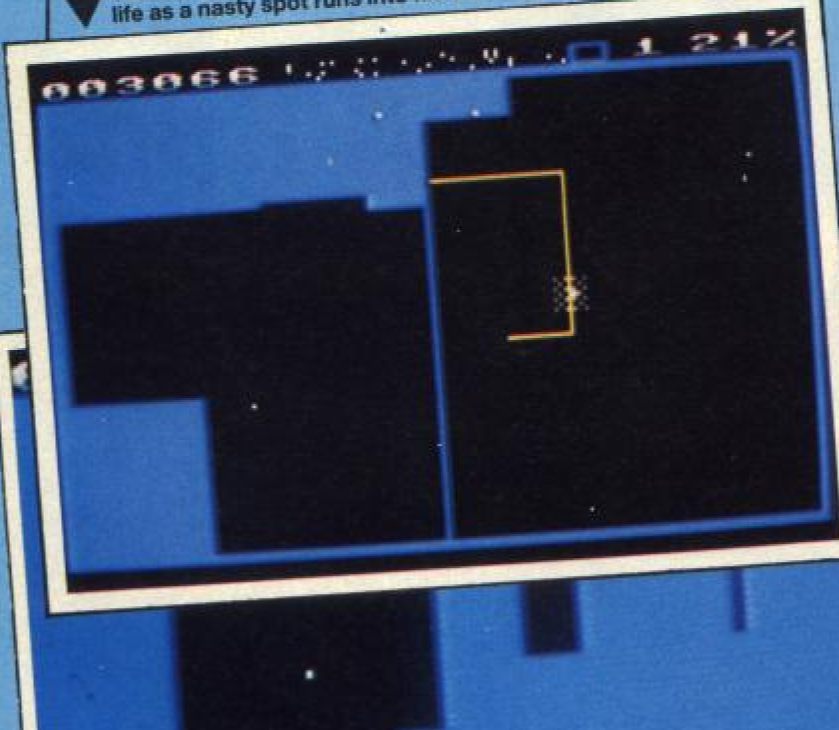


I can't sleep at night – those little spots flying through my brain, rebounding off my skull and attempting to blow me up . . . it's hell! My shrink can't understand it, no amount of drugs or therapy can prevent this raging addiction. I . . . I'm a Zolyxaholic. When I'm not actually seated at the screen, I'm locked away in a world of my own, inventing sub-games and working out ways of reaching level five or attaining the magical 99%. I'd really like to tell you more, but I'm off for another attempt . . .

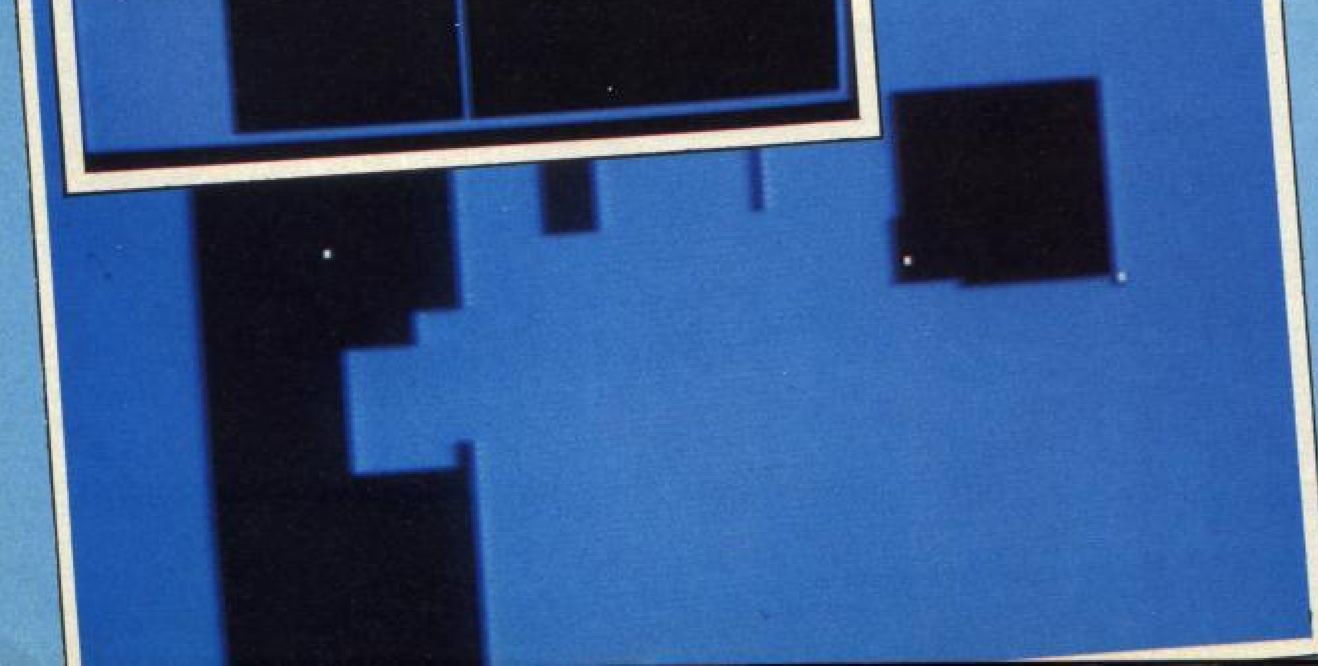
There's one thing that's really bugging me. Why is it that a game that looks like a complete and utter pile of rubbish can be so hellishly addictive? The graphics are bland and repetitive beyond belief, the sound is simply an afterthought and there is nothing in the way of options or a title screen. But, it's Qix and I love it. Each copy should come with a Government Health Warning: Playing Zolyx could lead to terminal brain fag.







Twenty-one percent of the arena covered – and Zolyx loses his last life as a nasty spot runs into his trail



Seventy-six percent of the arena covered – Hooray! Zolyx has completed the first screen!

PRESENTATION 47%
Pleasantly laid out, but a very poor title screen and no options.

GRAPHICS 35%
Plain and simple, but still effective.

SOUND 29%
A bubbly sort of noise plays throughout.

HOOKABILITY 97%
Unnervingly simple to pick up. Horribly difficult to put down.

LASTABILITY 74%
May pall initially, but it's the sort of game you can come back to and enjoy months later.

VALUE 97%
Well worth pawning your Granny for . . .

OVERALL 90%
One of the simplest and most addictive programs around. Try it if you think you can stand the pace.

NETHER EARTH

Argus Press Software, £9.95 cass, joystick or keys

Five eons ago a subterranean race called the Insignians broke through the Earth's crust in huge tunnelling machines and waged war on Mankind. The surface dwellers had no chance to defend themselves against this surprise attack, and the little resistance offered was swiftly crushed by the powerful Insignian war machines. The human race was enslaved and forced into the production of powerful robotic craft which the Insignians used to patrol their new domain.

Since the first invasion there have been many attempts to drive the Insignians back, but all have failed. Now, however, there is hope. An enemy base, Kerberus, has been captured by a small human resistance force and using the captured war machines the three other Insignian bases, Tarras, Faretra and Dioklos, can be taken.



Why Argus have released Nether Earth **in its present form is a complete mystery to me. It looks shoddy and unfinished, the screen glitches badly when it scrolls, the program crashes at regular intervals, has a large number of bugs and contains absolutely no playability. The presentation is also very poor, the graphics fail to represent anything other than a series of grey featureless shapes on a flat green surface, and the long-winded instructions offer little in the way of help. I can't find anything worthwhile about** Nether Earth **– it's an inconsequential piece of binary garbage that should never have seen the light of day.**



The concept is tight, but the execution and gameplay is abysmal. Why use a 3D approach to display the proceedings? An overhead or side-on view would have been far more interesting and allowed the action to flow faster and more freely. Sadly, as it stands Nether Earth **is slow, monotonous and surprisingly empty. Like so many recent Argus Press releases it lacks that vital, indescribable spark and is severely devoid of polish. I'm sure Argus Press are capable of producing more impressive software than this – so how about it?**

As leader of the resistance you dictate all action against the enemy. At the start of the battle you control an anti-grav reconnaissance flying machine, hovering above a diagonally scrolling landscape. A radar at the base of the screen shows your position, and the relative position of any other relevant features.

Six robot factories are scattered across the landscape, each producing one of six components – chassis, electronic support modules, nuclear, phaser, missile or cannon weapons. The factories are initially dormant, but become active as soon as a robot moves close. Thus, it is imperative to get your robot to the factories before the Insignian forces.

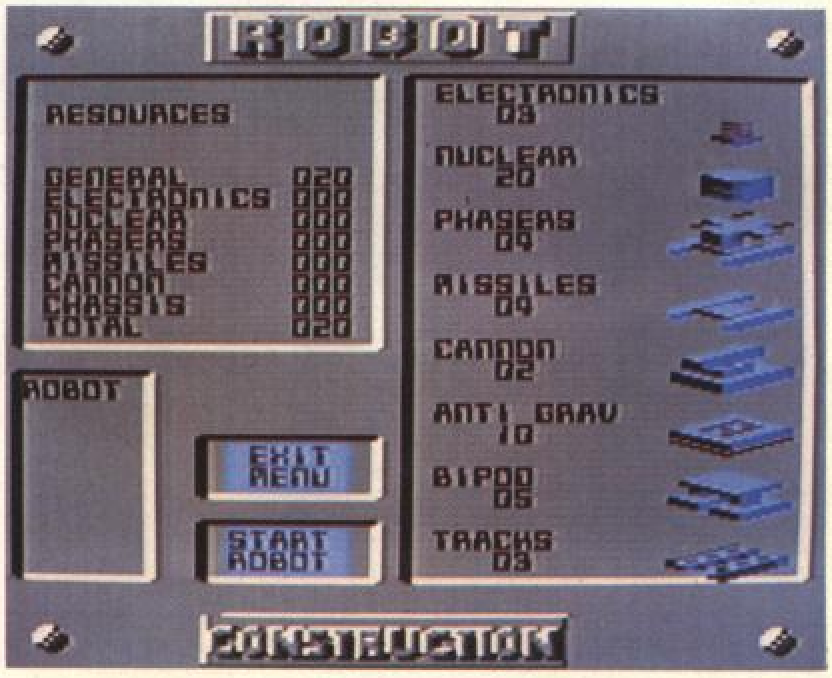
Landing the anti-grav machine on the pad at the captured base gives access to a production schedule showing captured factories, available machine parts and the current resources, measured in units and displayed at the bottom of the screen. Assembling the components produces fully working robots, diminishing the total resources available as each is built.

Robots are controlled in one of three ways. Direct control is gained by landing the anti-grav machine on the chosen robot – the disadvantage of this method is that only one robot can be controlled at a time. Alternatively, robots can be programmed with set instructions, or ordered to act independently, searching for and destroying enemy targets that come within their range.

Enemy robots attack throughout the battle, and the loss of any resistance craft, factory or base results in the display of a revised status report and diminished resource total. Conversely, conquering a factory adds to the figure and the rebel forces become more powerful – until finally, the Insignian force is crushed.

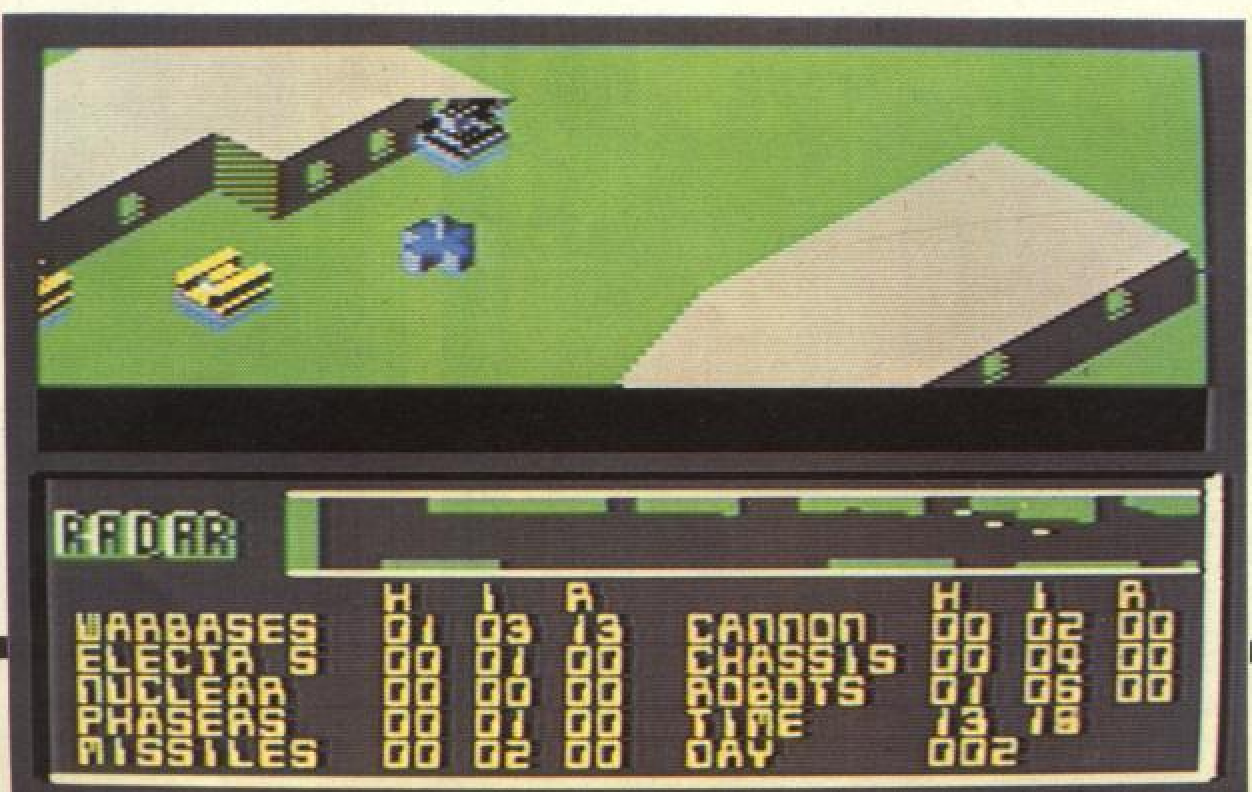


Argus Press seem to have some sort of vendetta against Commodore owners: first came the Grange Hill **fiasco, and now** Nether Earth **comes to darken our doorsteps. It's a visual nightmare, consisting of large bland areas of colour with no detail. The gameplay is slow and fiddly, and any interest soon dissipates when the task ahead becomes apparent. Argus Press are fast losing any credibility they once had –** Nether Earth **does nothing to rectify this situation.**



With only twenty credits at your disposal, you don't have a vast amount of choice when designing a robot

Your custom built war robot appears next to the factory building, while enemy tanks rumble past, oblivious to your presence ▼



PRESENTATION 41%
Confused instructions, ineffective title screen, poor on-screen presentation and a marked lack of options.

GRAPHICS 22%
Bland backdrops and sprites, complete with a screen glitch of seismic proportions.

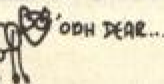
SOUND 29%
Forgettable title tune and spot effects.

HOOKABILITY 25%
Little action to enthral, and the unhelpful instructions quell any sort of enjoyment.

LASTABILITY 14%
Unrewarding, frustrating and completely unaddictive.

VALUE 7%
A high price to pay for such a worthless release.

OVERALL 15%
A potentially good idea ruined by inept execution.



MASTERS OF THE UNIVERSE

US Gold, £9.99 cass, £14.99 disk, joystick only

Having successfully transferred from a popular cartoon series to an even more popular range of toys, *Masters Of The Universe* and their stalwart leader He-Man, have now surfaced on the 64, courtesy of US Gold.

Formerly appearing as an adventure game (reviewed in ZZAP! issue 24), *Masters Of The Universe* now takes the form of a platform game cum arcade adventure, incorporating both scrolling and flip-screen graphics.

Filling the role of He-Man, you do battle against Skeletor, the evil Lord of Destruction (and would-be ruler of Eternia). Having discovered the 'Ilearth Stone', Skeletor has harnessed its magical power to banish the Sorceress and take over Castle Grayskull. He is now building up his army of Clone warriors in order to attack the Palace.



High in the battlements, He-Man is surrounded by Skeletor's Clones. ▲ Surely no match for a Master of the Universe?



Holy trademarks! How the mighty have fallen! Once Master of the Universe, poor old He-Man is now reduced to playing a sprite in a sub-standard platform arcade adventure! The joystick-response is sluggish, and the scrolling is even slower – the ambling steroid-man has to stop every few moves and wait for the scenery to catch up. Jumping from platform to platform is frustratingly tricky, requiring virtual pixel-perfect precision to ensure a safe landing. I found myself becoming increasingly irritated with every play and was glad to switch off. The most ridiculous thing of all is that fans of the TV series will probably rush out in their thousands and buy it without even looking at it . . .

Orko, He-Man's magician friend, has become imprisoned by one of his own spells, and currently lies helpless, somewhere within the fortress.

He-Man must enter Castle Grayskull, free Orko and present him with the correct ingredients to enable the sorcerer to turn He-Man's Sword of Power into an 'Atom Smasher.' Only then can He-Man destroy the Ilearth Stone, and rid the land of Skeletor once and for all!

He-Man initially appears in Castle Grayskull. Running the gauntlet of Skeletor's Clones, he seeks out Orko who is hidden in one of the towers. Attacking Clones are despatched with a deft blow from He-Man's sword, but as he progresses further into Skeletor's domain, this task needs more than just a sharp edge. The sword of Power is strengthened by collecting magic icons which enable it to fire bolts of energy, killing the Clones from a distance.

He-Man follows a treacherous path through the castle, leaping from ledge to ledge and using platforms and spinning elevators to negotiate the rooms and passages.



It looks very pretty, but beneath the impressive exterior lies a sub-standard platform game. Controlling He-Man isn't easy (being able to fall off a platform by moving out of the screen doesn't help), and running around, jumping from platform to platform and fighting Skeletor's minions is slow, monotonous and frustrating. This isn't exactly a complete waste of a licence, as I can see it appealing to fans of the toys. But as a game in its own right – forget it.



Graphically, Masters Of The Universe is a very pretty product. The backdrops are extremely smart, almost capturing some of the cartoon's atmosphere. It's only when you begin to play the game itself that initial hopes are brutally shattered. He-Man lethargically lopes around, and even that's too rapid for the backdrops. Control of He-Man himself is awkward, and leaping onto platforms and elevators proves annoyingly difficult to accomplish. Consequently, a lot of time is taken in merely trying to move around, rather than actually achieving any objectives. The more perseverant amongst you may find a decent challenge in this; I found it a chore.

The ingredients necessary for Orko's spell are gathered from around the castle and its grounds. The recipe is very specific, and if the wrong items are used the spell will not work.

The screen displays He-Man and his surroundings, with a status panel appearing beneath. Information regarding the strength of his sword and body shield is provided, along with a graphic representation of the items collected for Orko's spell.

If the power of He-Man's body shield is reduced to zero, any further contact with Skeletor's henchmen proves fatal – and He-Man only has four attempts to complete his task.

Skeletor closes in for the final confrontation with He-Man: can our hero save the day – and all Eternia into the bargain . . . ▼



PRESENTATION 62%
Poor instructions and limited options.

GRAPHICS 85%
Colourful backdrops and characters, but annoyingly slow all round.

SOUND 63%
Stirring He-Man tune trundles along during play.

HOOKABILITY 37%
Slow gameplay and awkward control dampens the enthusiasm.

LASTABILITY 42%
A lot of castle to explore, but at the speed He-Man moves it could take many tiresome weeks.

VALUE 32%
A high price to pay for some attractive graphics.

OVERALL 44%
A weak concept dressed up with a powerful licence. It's cheaper and more rewarding to buy the toys and use your imagination, or to watch the TV series.

JON RITMAN AND BERNIE DRUMMOND PRESENT DOUBLE TROUBLE...



MASTER GAME

"What a tremendous game! The graphics are superbly designed, the characters perfectly animated, the gameplay so addictive you'll never want to switch off. There is plenty of variety and an abundance of humour. Head Over Heels is set to become a classic."

AMTIX! Accolade

"Beautifully-defined characters that glide around the screen without a glitch. Should grace the shelves of every PC owner."



Hi! My name's Mr. Head. Some say I'm the one with the brains but I don't think my flat footed friend would agree. I'm a real sharp shooter, but without my pal Mr. Heels I'd get nowhere fast . . . or slow! I can jump like a flea and even glide but Heels is the Daley Thompson of the two of us – he's FAST! Together, if we can find each other, we really do make an awesome twosome, and that's the only way we can overcome the emperor Blacktooth. The last time we entered Castle Blacktooth we found the crowns of THREE of the supressed Kingdoms but by that time I'd run out of doughnut ammunition and my buddy was lost somewhere in the Safari world – it was the closest we had come to defeating that rapscallion – we were jumping for joy, splitting out sides, dying with laughter . . . we were Head over Heels!

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CYBORG

CRL, £8.95 cass, £14.95 disk, joystick with keys

Avernus is a huge asteroid – locked on a fatal collision course with Earth. Carrying a cargo of seven top scientists, the good ship Strata set out on its mission to find a way of altering the path of the rock. That was two months ago, and since then . . . nothing.

A cyborg sent to ferry supplies and re-establish contact with the team finds only a deserted ship and a garbled message left by one of the scientists; the asteroid is actually a huge alien ship, on course for Earth and intent on its consequent destruction.



The long-awaited Cyborg finally graces the ZZAP! computers and . . . well, it's a little disappointing. There are some very nice graphics, with plenty of detail but the backdrops tend to be a bit on the gaudy side. The action is somewhat tedious, since it seems more difficult for you to kill the aliens than it is for them to kill you. Consequently, it could well take several serious attempts to make any progress at all. An annoying aspect is the constant use of the f1 key to access the options sheet, and also the precision needed to go through doorways – especially when under severe attack. As it stands, Cyborg needs more life injected into it before its potential is fulfilled.



Cyborg is here at last, but sadly the end product doesn't live up to the pre-release hype. The concept is commendable, but the gameplay is severely marred by an extremely awkward control method. The graphics portray the action very well, but the lack of good sound effects ruins the atmosphere. Ultimately, the main problem is the playability – it isn't rewarding or addictive enough. You may think differently, but I'd recommend that you look hard before reaching for your wallet.

You take the part of the cyborg – a strange combination of flesh and metal; better than just machine – more than merely human. His actions are controlled by joystick or keyboard, with the mission beginning on the surface of the asteroid.

The first three levels are accessed on entry to the asteroid, with each level containing rooms to be explored. A host of aliens and robots patrol and must be destroyed or avoided, as the cyborg can die like a human being.



△ Cyborg stands alone in the control room of his ship, contemplating the mission ahead

Entry is gained to locked rooms by use of a code number, with the codes for each level obtained from computer terminals around the complex. Control of the asteroid/ship is your ultimate aim, but where is the main computer – and can you operate it even if you find it? . . .

The screen is split in two, with the main display forming the upper half, showing our hero and his surroundings, including the enemy and any potentially useful objects. The lower half is taken up by an options display and read-out panel, which controls nine functions and is accessed by pressing f1. The game can be paused, and the current situation saved to tape and reloaded as required.

The cyborg operates using a power unit, which is protected by a shield. The shield's energy drops while blasting, but slowly regenerates itself. The power unit is damaged when the shield's power is reduced to zero – if the power unit also reaches this level, the cyborg dies and the Earth is doomed.



There doesn't seem to be a great deal to Cyborg and the fact that it's slow and dreary doesn't help. It doesn't feel good and the incompetent graphics and minimal sound effects ruin the atmosphere. It would have been neat if extra equipment could have been picked up and bolted on along the way, and if there was more to do than trudge around, occasionally shooting guards and robots. But, unfortunately, there's little in the way of stimulating action, and certainly not enough absorbing gameplay on offer for the price.

▽ An attacking droid chases the cyborg through a corridor on the third level



PRESENTATION 57%
The instructions are purposefully sparse, and consequently a little unhelpful.

GRAPHICS 71%
Fair 3D effect, animation and bas-relief backdrops.

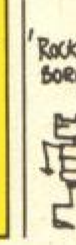
SOUND 31%
No music and limited effects.

HOOKABILITY 45%
The awkward control and poor instructions do little to pave the way.

LASTABILITY 41%
Large complex to explore, but not enough varied or absorbing action.

VALUE 43%
A glorified and expensive sight-seeing tour.

OVERALL 45%
An exciting concept which hasn't been suitably utilised or executed.



HERO

Firebird/Activision, £1.99 cass, joystick only

Set in a mine's dank shafts and caverns, *HERO* follows the exploits of Roderick Hero, a member of the HERO team – Helicopter Emergency Rescue Operations.

Kitted out with a Heli-Pack, dynamite and a laser pistol, old Rodders descends into the dark depths to rescue a party of lost miners. The intrepid hero ignores subterranean hazards including large poisonous spiders, bats and snakes.

Hero's path is barred in many places by walls of rock – blasted aside by use of dynamite. However, when a charge has been dropped Roderick has to run clear lest he be caught in the blast!

Should Roderick run out of dynamite and subsequently encounter another wall, continuous blasting with his laser pistol clears an adequate path. This method's drawback is that it seriously depletes his power, displayed as a diminishing bar at the bottom of the screen. A life is lost when the power level reaches zero, and also when any contact is made with creepy crawlies or glowing red lava walls.

Points are amassed during the game for the destruction of creatures, removal of walls, and the eventual rescue of each miner. The amount of dynamite used in the operation and the remaining





△ Things are looking bad for Rodders: it's his last life, only one stick of dynamite is left, and his power's running low too . . .



Now, this is what I call a game, none of this poncing about with licensing deals – just pure and simple creativity. What particularly appeals to me is the way in which the game slowly unfolds the further you get. Each level presents new problems, and slowly but surely you begin to learn the way things work. It's a pity that the sound is scarce, as I can't stop thinking how brilliant it would be with a tune playing throughout. One of the best games to spend a couple of coins on this month.



HERO looks awful, sounds terrible but plays absolutely beautifully. What appeals most about this classic oldie is that it's simple in concept, but remains incredibly challenging and addictive. While the gameplay is basic, finding the right route to the stranded miners takes some doing. Some of the later levels are very tricky, and it's quite easy to take a wrong turn and end up screens away from the objective and out of power. At two quid this is a steal – it might be three years old, but it's still as fresh and exciting as ever.

▽ About to blow up a lava wall, Roderick stands well clear to avoid ending up in bits





power level are also taken into account.

The mine is split into 17 levels, with a miner at the bottom of each. Later levels can be accessed from the title screen and played as normal, allowing you a taste of what's to come without having to play through the earlier stages.



Even though HERO was first released around three years ago it still contains heaps of playability. It's nothing to shout about graphically, but it does have one or two neat effects and has enough addictiveness and depth (excuse the pun) to keep most people amused for some time. Possibly overpriced when first released, it really hits the mark now and shouldn't be missed.

PRESENTATION 85%
Demo mode, restart facility and many useful options.

GRAPHICS 59%
Generally bland, although occasionally effective.

SOUND 45%
No music and sparse but adequate spot effects.

HOOKABILITY 91%
Endearing from the very first go.

LASTABILITY 88%
Five levels of play and seventeen increasingly difficult mines give scope for months of play.

VALUE 96%
A cheap and exciting thrill.

OVERALL 86%
Not just a programming exercise, a fabulous exploration designed with the player in mind.

JUMPIN' JIMMY

Midas Marketing, £2.99 cass, joystick only

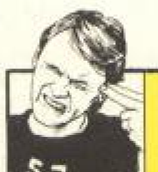
Jumpin' Jimmy is a kangaroo with a fruit fetish, willing to go to any lengths to acquire his favourite food. His quest takes him over a large platform-filled area, where all manner of native Australian creatures attempt to bar his way. Koalas, Snakes and Spiders conspire against him, throwing ripe bananas and boomerangs, or momentarily stunning him on contact. Being a boxing kangaroo, Jimmy can deal with most creatures by use of his fists. This knocks them momentarily unconscious, enabling him to escape.

The playing area is set across six scrolling screens. When a likely looking place appears for Jimmy to start his search, any movement of the joystick causes him to leap down from his perch and land on the first platform beneath.

Fruit lies around the playing area, forming the shape of numbers – a feature which becomes more apparent when viewed from the top of screen radar. Other landscape features which both help and hinder our antipodean hero are glowing stars (which transport him around the landscape) and elevators which allow him to reach other platforms. There are also baby kangaroos to be collected, along with valuable jewels to increase his score.

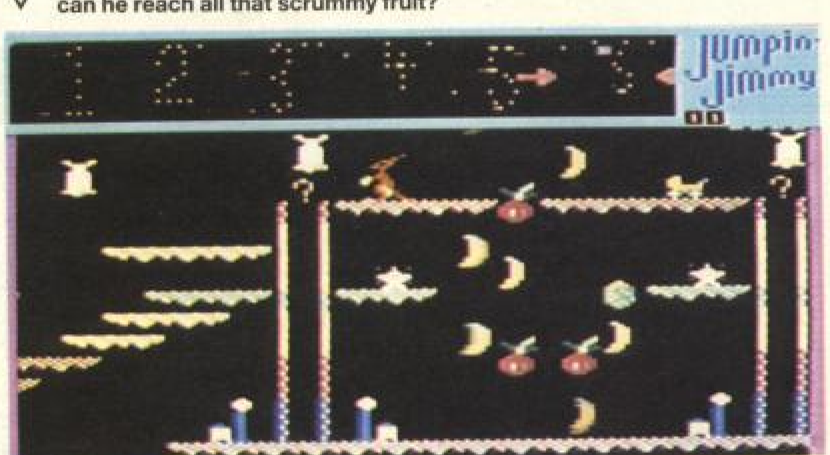
Falling from a platform or colliding with anything hostile causes Jimmy to sprout wings and a halo, whereupon he floats, angel-like, to the top of the screen and a life is lost.

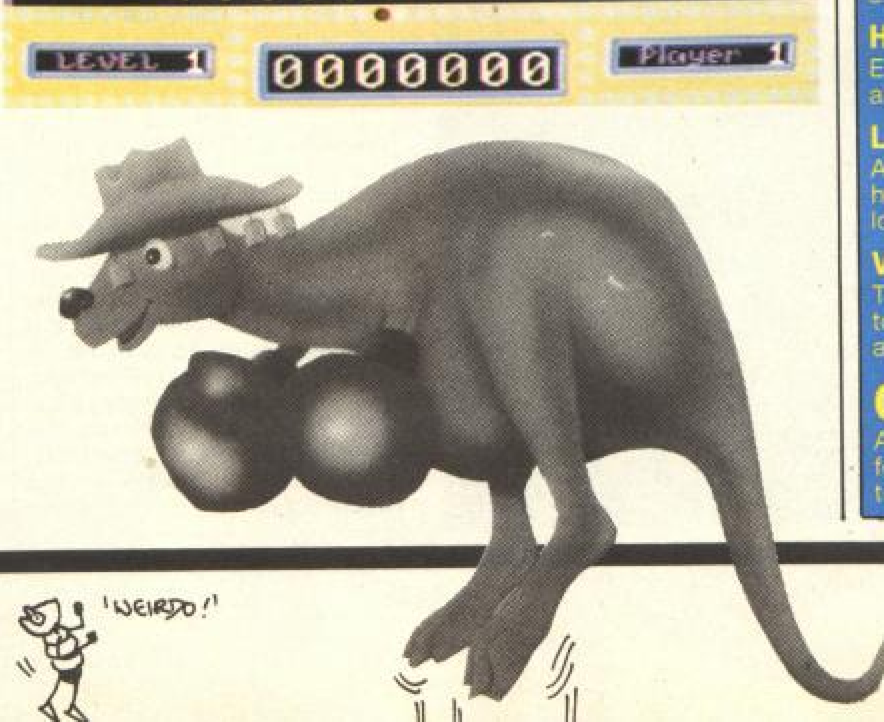
Up to four players can participate, competing over four separately loaded levels. Details relevant to the current screen are displayed during loading, giving clues as to the use of any collected objects.



Platform games are not exactly a dying breed, but they should at least be a protected species. Jumpin' Jimmy **represents the worst of the genre. It's tremendously difficult to play, with almost no serious objective other than collecting the fruit. Matters are made worse by illogical gameplay, where literally stepping from one platform to another causes death. Sometimes it makes you wonder if these games are play-tested at all before being bundled off to the distributor. Leave the three quid in your pocket . . . and** Jumpin' Jimmy **on the shelf where it belongs.**

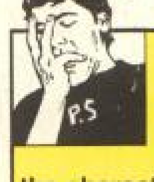
▽ **High on a platform, Jumpin' Jimmy surveys his surroundings. How can he reach all that scrummy fruit?**







Making a game challenging is one thing, but making it totally unplayable is another. Jumpin' Jimmy **is so difficult that it's hardly worth the bother of loading. The most annoying points are the really odd control method, Jimmy dying when he falls just one pixel (yet he falls ten times that height when he jumps) and the useless instructions which give no indication as to what should be done. These faults tend to overshadow the few endearing factors and complete frustration sets in after a few goes of getting absolutely nowhere. Having to reload after each go is the last straw.**



I can't see why the programmer bothered to make this so hard – losing a life because the character under your control falls to a platform only a few pixels below is ridiculous. I also can't understand why the program requires a multi-load – none of the levels are bursting with amazing graphics and sound or outstanding gameplay which push the 64 to its limits, so why make an unplayable game even more unfriendly by using a multi-load? Some of the spot effects and jingles are clear and effective, and the game has style, but it's severely lacking variety and playability – a pity, as it could have been a neat little budget game.

PRESENTATION 47%
Good options, but a ridiculous multi-load system.

GRAPHICS 29%
Simplistic but colourful backdrops and miniscule sprites.

SOUND 69%
Some quality jingles and spot effects.

HOOKABILITY 31%
Extremely difficult, frustrating and tedious.

LASTABILITY 25%
Any remaining urge to play is heavily dampened by the multi-load.

VALUE 34%
Too frustrating and unplayable to be worth the relatively cheap asking price.

OVERALL 27%
A potentially entertaining platform game ruined by its execution.

ZZAP! TEST

STAR RAIDERS II

Electric Dreams, £9.99 cass, £14.99 disk, joystick only

Atari's *Star Raiders* never appeared on the Commodore, so this is really a sequel without a predecessor. The original version (which appeared all of eight years ago), saw the player destroying the invading Zylon fleet single-handedly. The evil Zylons are back, and the only person between them and the destruction of the entire human race is you – pilot of the most versatile fighting ship in the galaxy, the Liberty Star . . .

The screen is split into two main display areas – the top half taken up by the cockpit window, the bottom comprising a weapons and status display panel.

The conflict takes place over two separate star systems: yours and the invading Zylons'. A marker shows the current position of Liberty Star, with an icon used to highlight map features such as planets or attacking fleets. To hyperspace to a new location or system, a destination is plotted with the icon and the fire button pressed.



After an initial disappointment, Star Raiders II **gradually began to grow on me. What's most appealing is the the way you have to control several functions at once. It's a shame that the graphics and sound don't support the interesting and involved gameplay – the program looks and sounds bland, and most of the sprites and planetscapes are poor. There's plenty to keep an avid galaxy-saver happy for a number of weeks, but before you purchase consider a point – Americana's** Sentinel **is a far, far classier product, offering more playability and depth** *and* **it's seven quid cheaper.**

Fleets of Zylon craft fly from their home system to carry out raids. If left unchecked, a fleet flies down to a planet's surface and wipes out its cities one by one. When every allied city is wiped out the Zylons are considered to have won the battle and the mission is terminated.

An invading fleet can itself be attacked by hyperspacing Liberty Star to the threatened sector. The annihilation of a Zylon attack force requires the destruction of ten nimble attack fighters, five motherships and a large flagship.

Throughout a skirmish the craft's power cells are drained, with this drainage represented by a diminishing bar on the status panel. The power cells are topped up by hyperspacing to one of the two giant space stations on opposite edges of the home system, here the Liberty Star automatically docks and the batteries are recharged.

As well as guarding the home planet system, there is the problem of undertaking bombing runs over Zylon planets. Failure to do so results in the continuing production of Zylon craft, and consequently an overwhelming number of attacking fleets. Bombing runs are carried out by travelling to one of the planets in the Zylon system, and utilising the 20 air-to-ground missiles which the Liberty Star carries specifically for this task.

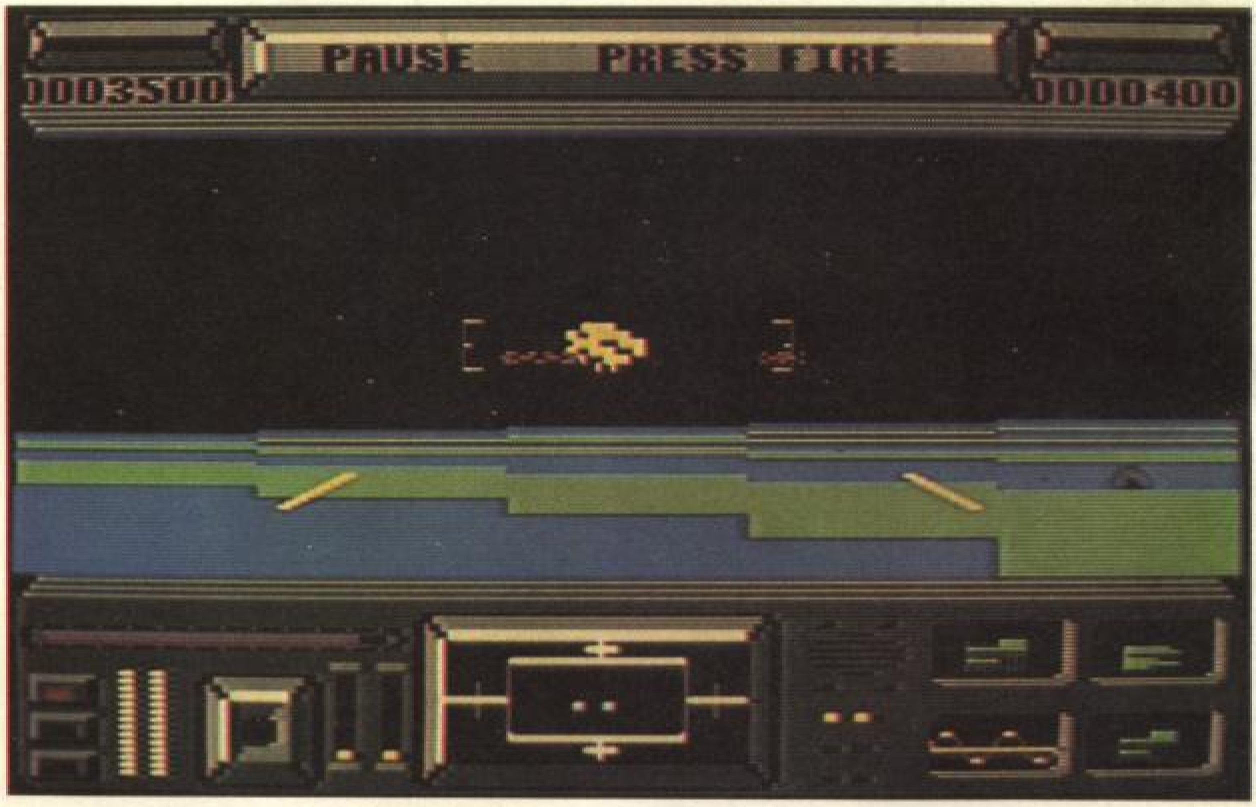
When the complement of bombs have been exhausted, the Liberty Star flies back to the home system and rearms by docking with a space station.

The action continues in this vein until either the home planets lie barren, or the entire Zylon fleet and their planets lie in ruin – it's them or us, ace.



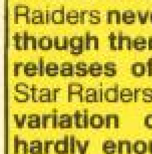
I've never been particularly fond of Star Raiders, **although i did enjoy Americana's** Sentinel **which is in a very similar vein. This sequel doesn't seem much of a progression over its predecessor, in fact in many ways it's a regression.** Star Raiders II **isn't as atmospheric or polished as** Sentinel, **offers less variety and playability, and is considerably more expensive. Basically, i wouldn't bother.**

A Zylon ship disappears in a cloud of vapour, high above the planet's surface ▼



The destination of your starship is shown using a hi-tech computer . . . and a pointy hand! ▼





The advertisements for Star Raiders II **have certainly been around for long enough, and finally we have the game – I think I preferred the adverts! The original** Star Raiders **never made it to the 64, though there have been many releases of a similar design.** Star Raiders II **does have a little variation of gameplay, but hardly enough to warrant its asking price. It offers nothing new in the way of graphics, and there are certainly no musical advances. Essentially,** Star Raiders II **is playable but overpriced.**

PRESENTATION 83%
Good all round, pleasant and well packaged.

GRAPHICS 58%
Some of the sprites are very chunky and the backdrops are far from brilliant.

SOUND 40%
Poor title screen tune and sub-standard sound effects.

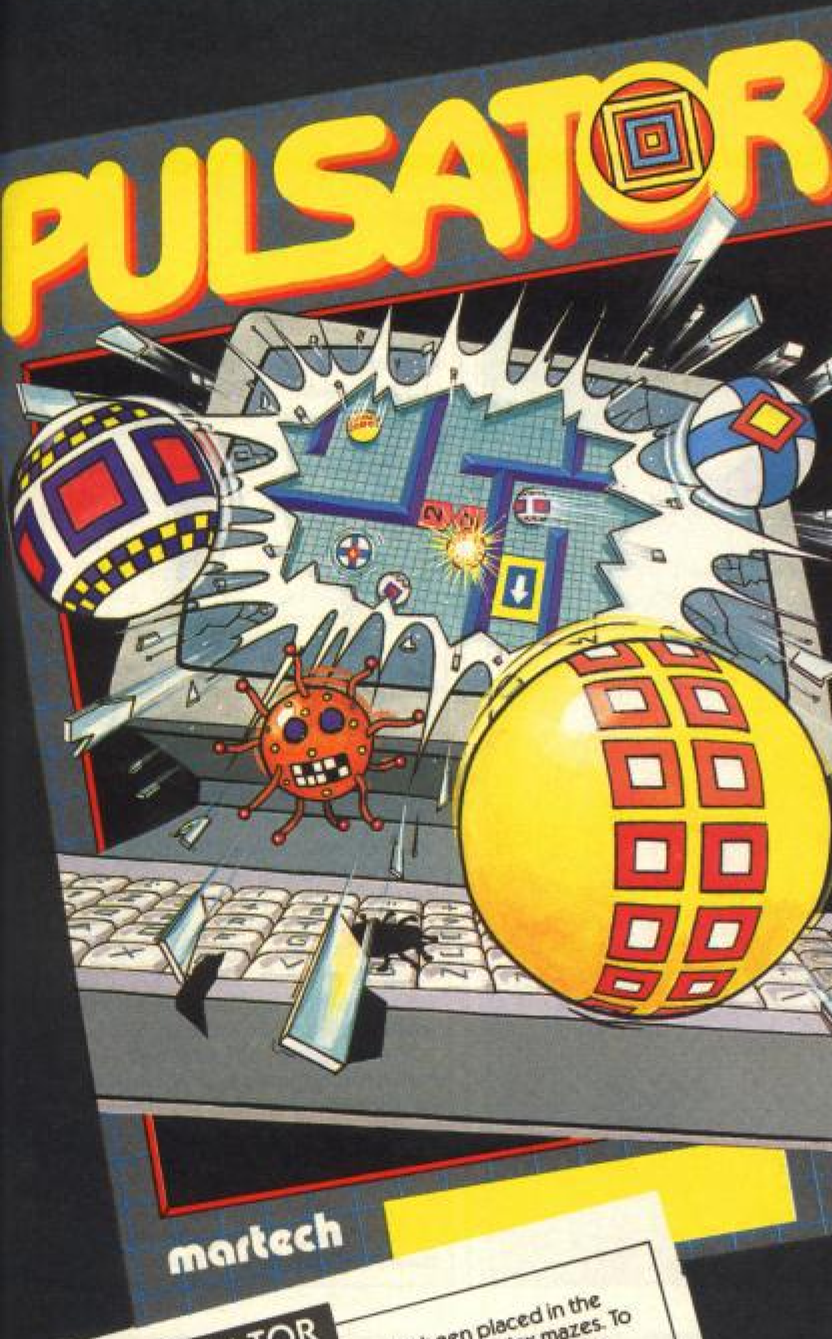
HOOKABILITY 69%
Initially confusing, but enjoyable nevertheless.

LASTABILITY 57%
Plenty of galaxy saving fun to be had, but only if you're heavily into this type of game.

VALUE 39%
Too high a price tag for a barely above average game.

OVERALL 58%
Disappointing. A mediocre sequel to a classic game. Only likely to appeal to the most ardent of addicts.

martech.... LIVE THE GAME!





PULSATOR

Your 'pulsator' has no choice. He has been placed in the heart of a series of frighteningly dangerous complex mazes. To escape, he must release the five missing 'Pulsies' each one a captive on a different maze layer.

But he is not alone. A variety of deadly and intelligent enemy pulsators patrol the mazes, each with its own devious way of making life difficult.

Blasting them to pieces will not always be the right thing to do – and anyway, it's easier said than done.

A fast moving and addictive game, requiring quick reactions and quick thinking. Only for those in search of a real challenge!

NEMESIS THE WARLOCK

Can Nemesis the Warlock fight his way through screen after screen of vicious Terminators to find and destroy Torquemada, cruel grand Master of Termight?

Wave upon wave of the evil horde fall before his gun or to crushing blows from his mighty sword Execessus, but still they come. As the battle rages, Torquemada exerts his twisted influence on the scattered corpses of his demented followers and they burst grotesquely into life as deadly scythe-wielding zombies.

Become Nemesis the Warlock, from 2000 AD, and enter this nightmare world – you may never return!!

COSMIC SHOCK ABSORBER

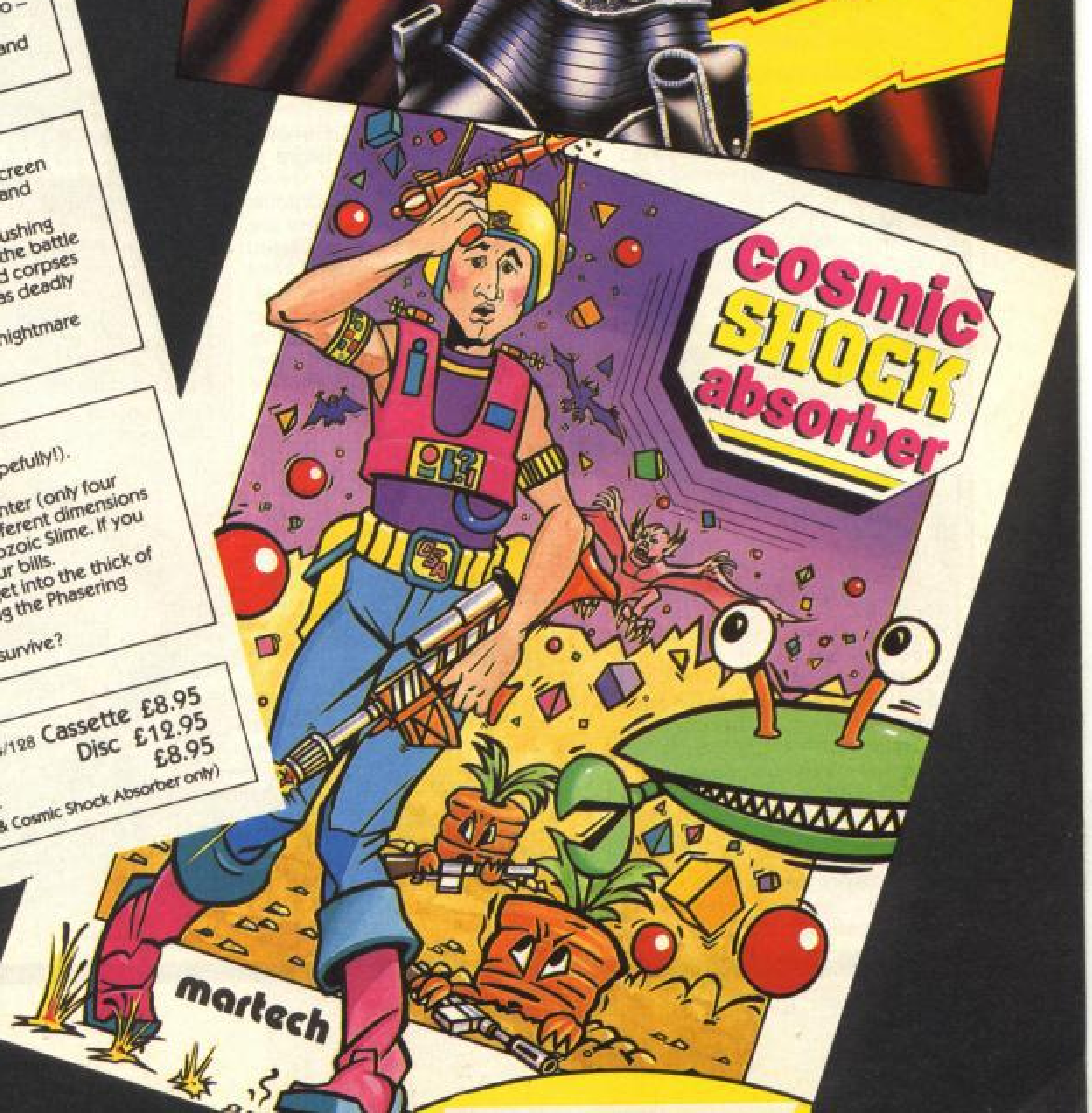
You are Cosmic Shock Absorber, Saviour of the Universe (hopefully!). Time and Space is falling apart (again?).

Cocooned safely in the cockpit of your CZ Neutrozapper fighter (only four repayments left) it is your job to blast your way through the different dimensions of chaos to the source of life itself, the Interstellar Lake of Protozoic Slime. If you make it, the Universe may survive, and most people will pay your bills.

But . . . wait a minute . . . it's worse than that. In the rush to get into the thick of the action – you forgot the 'How to Repair Circuit Boards using the Phasering Iron Manual'. Can Earth possibly survive?

Oh No – Cosmic Catastrophe!!!!

Spectrum Cassette		£7.95
Amstrad Cassette		£8.95
	Disc	£14.95
Commodore 64/128	Cassette	£8.95
	Disc	£12.95
MSX Cassette (Pulsator & Cosmic Shock Absorber only)		£8.95



THE SECRET OF KANDAR

Power House, £2.99 cass, joystick only

The Secret of Kandar is a flip-screen, graphical adventure set within a huge Castle. The fortress consists of rooms, dungeons, and battlements, set on different floors and accessible by stairways. Taking a firm grip of your joystick, you guide the main character around in search of 'the secret' – whatever that may be.

The quest begins with your character standing in front of the castle, adjacent to the main entrance. Useful objects are scattered around the floor and are picked up by walking over them. The collected item is exchanged with the first item in your inventory, as only two objects may be carried at one time.

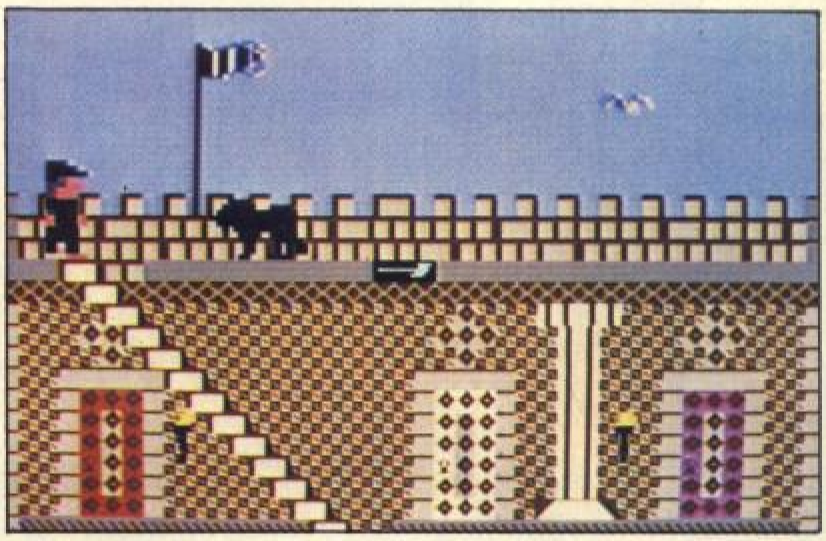
Keys are used to open doors, which are subsequently passed through by placing your character in front of the door and pushing the joystick upwards. The screen then flips to the new location, be it a room, cell, or corridor.

Your search for 'the secret' is hampered by the presence of flying bats, scurrying mice, ogres and ghostly suits of armour which attempt to bash your skull in with



I'm finding it difficult to make up my mind about The Secret of Kandar **– it looks horrendous, but it does possess some playability. Mapping is essential, especially as the instructions don't even tell you what it is that you are supposed to be looking for! Adventure junkies in need of a fix could well find this appealing, but think again if you like your adventures with a liberal sprinkling of quality.**

The battlements of Castle Kandar: an axe awaits collection – after the vicious dog has been dealt with . . . ▼





The gaudy and chunky graphics are the most instantly striking feature of The Secret of Kandar. **The pixels are ten times their normal size, giving the effect of a ZX81 with an add-on colour board. The sound is funny too – a musical cacophony of hooting and wailing which doesn't quite grate the ears as badly as the graphics grate the eyes. But, and this is a big but, there is a game in there – albeit a very simple one. There are a hundred screens in dire need of mapping and a number of tricky problems to solve – not bad for a two quid program. Try** Pitfall II **or** Feud **first, then have a look at this if your adventuring hunger hasn't been satisfied.**

VAMPIRE

Code Masters, £1.99 cass, joystick or keys

Far into the future, Dracula and his vampire followers have risen again to take take control of the Earth and its space stations, continuing their reign of terror over mere mortals.

Trapped in an otherwise humdrum existence, Brok the Brave has gladly taken on the greatest challenge of his life: to enter Dracula's castle and despatch the fanged bloodsucker, thus freeing the world from the evil blight of vampirism for ever.

The destruction of Dracula won't be easy though – there are four initial tasks to be completed within the castle, before the Count is finally confronted in deep space.

Initially, five keys must be found and placed in their respective locks, opening all the doors in the castle. To make things a little more difficult, one of the keys happens to be found on the opposite side of a vast chasm, which can only be traversed if a pedal-powered generator is fixed.



Brok's energy is a bit on the low side – better head for the roast chicken under the table



Boing! goes the little sprite as it whizzes across one side of the screen. Boing! it goes as it whizzes back. Yawn . . . goes me and click goes the off switch. Vampire **has no redeeming features to save it from being left on the shelf. For a start the control method is awful, and the sprite spings and spangs around the screen with a will of its own. Using the joystick is pointless, and frustration quickly sets in. By the way, it's also very hard on the eyes and dull to the ears.**



an axe. More fiendish adversaries lie in wait in the dungeons below, leaping on you as soon as you enter their cell. Contact causes the loss of a life, and transports you back to the initial location at the front of the castle.

The status of your character is viewed at any time by pulling down on the joystick. The status sheet then flips down, showing your score, the amount of lives remaining, the number of locations visited and the items currently in your possession. Pushing up on the joystick returns you to your quest.



This program looks and is unpolished and ugly, but it's not all that bad to play. Beneath the laughable graphics and sound is a reasonably neat exploration game, dying to be let out. What I can't understand is why somebody else wasn't bought in to do the graphics and sound – the programmer can obviously put a game together, he just can't draw or write music. As it stands many people will be instantly put off by the amateurish presentation, which is a shame because it's not all that bad.

PRESENTATION 48%
No title screen to speak of, and barely average in-game presentation.

GRAPHICS 21%
Very basic, chunky and almost offensive to the eye.

SOUND 27%
Awful renditions of several classical tunes play throughout the quest.

HOOKABILITY 51%
Mildly compelling exploring action, if you can bear the crude exterior.

LASTABILITY 39%
Plenty of locations to explore, but there's no real urge to see them all.

VALUE 49%
Provides little more than a couple of afternoon's entertainment.

OVERALL 41%
A reasonable arcade adventure mostly let down by ugly cosmetics.



Once more the halcyon days of Spectrum platform games are with us. Yes folks, at tremendous expense, Code Masters have exhumed a dated Spectrum game and transferred it, lock, stock and attributes to the 64. There's a fair amount of depth, but at the rate that your energy is reduced on contact with the meanies it takes several attempts to get anywhere at all. The lack of control over the main character is another real pain, especially considering the precision needed for some of the platforms. If you do buy Vampire **don't be too surprised if you get to see the first screen a couple of hundred times.**

The third task involves finding and opening six magical shutters, allowing sunlight to purge the castle. Finally, collection of a hammer and stake allows entry to the top of the castle, where a teleportation device hurls you into space. Here, equipped with laser and jet-pack, you attempt to defeat the Prince of Darkness himself.

A side view is presented of the castle and its denizens, with our hero appearing near the bottom of the screen. Brok makes his way through the castle, negotiating all manner of platforms and obstacles in order to progress. Dracula's followers make regular appearances, with contact causing a severe loss of energy. Should Brok's energy dissipate entirely, the Count has won and the mission has to begin again.

XENON RANGER

The Power House, £2.99 cass, joystick only

As any mere Ranger will tell you, to reach the grade of 'Xenon', is the ultimate aspiration of any copter pilot. This unusual combination of shoot 'em up and platform game offers you the chance to earn that coveted title.

The screen is split in two – the two-way horizontally scrolling shoot 'em up occupying the upper half with the platform scene below. These appear concurrently but are played as consecutive sections.



I don't like this at all, and I'm annoyed that I've wasted my time playing it. In a way I have some sympathy for the program – it's unfortunate enough to be totally incapable of offering any sort of entertainment. Both sections are extremely dull.

Beginning with the shooting match, you take control of a helicopter flying around an alien landscape. The aim is to collect energy packs, while dodging and destroying the alien choppers who fly about in hot pursuit. Having landed on a pack, it attaches itself to the rear of the chopper. You then fly back to the underground entrance, where the pack disappears and is noted on a counter at the top of the screen.

When two other packs have been collected, the entrance opens and you drop from the copter down to the underground platforms. Here you wend your way through a variety of hazards, leaping deadly bushes and avoiding laser beams. Both of these deplete your energy, as displayed on a diminishing bar meter. When the meter reads zero, a life is lost and you are returned to the first platform, ready to start again.



I'm not quite sure what the programmer was aiming at when he first started programming this computer program, but the end result is a two-part mish-mash of rubbish. The shoot 'em up section lacks action and thrills, while the platform game is inept and frustrating due to the poor control method.



Without putting too fine a point on it, Xenon Ranger is unmitigated drivel – the designer should have his programming licence taken away. The shoot 'em up section is extremely basic and the graphics are infantile and gaudy. The platform part is reasonable enough, only suffering the slight handicap of being totally unplayable. Oh yes . . . one other tiny flaw is that the main character is slow and virtually impossible to control. Don't even think about buying this.

PRESENTATION 42%
Poor – no options and a bland title screen.

GRAPHICS 25%
Extremely simple with ineffective use of colour.

SOUND 29%
Adds nothing to the atmosphere or gameplay.

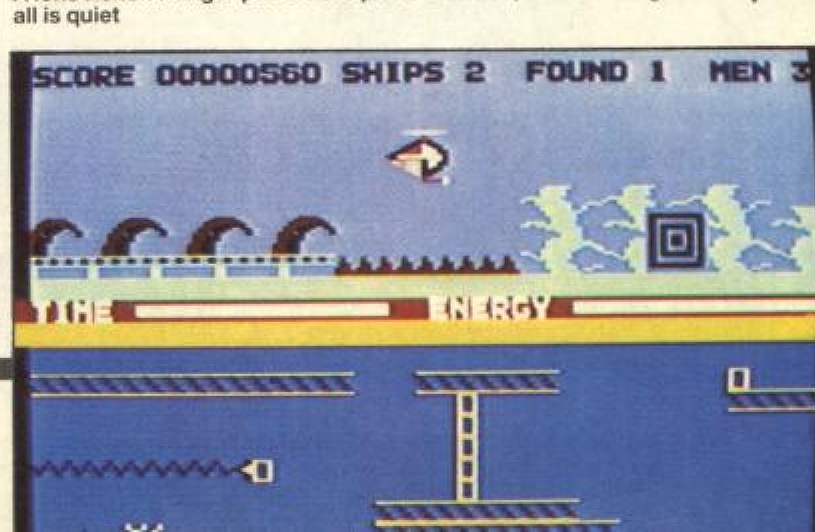
HOOKABILITY 32%
Unthrilling gameplay gives very little instant reward . . .

LASTABILITY 20%
The first section is far too easy, and the second too hard. No impulse to return at all.

VALUE 26%
There are far more worthwhile things to spend two quid on.

OVERALL 17%
A poorly executed mixture of two unexciting concepts.

A lone Xenon Ranger patrols the planet surface, while underground all is quiet ▼



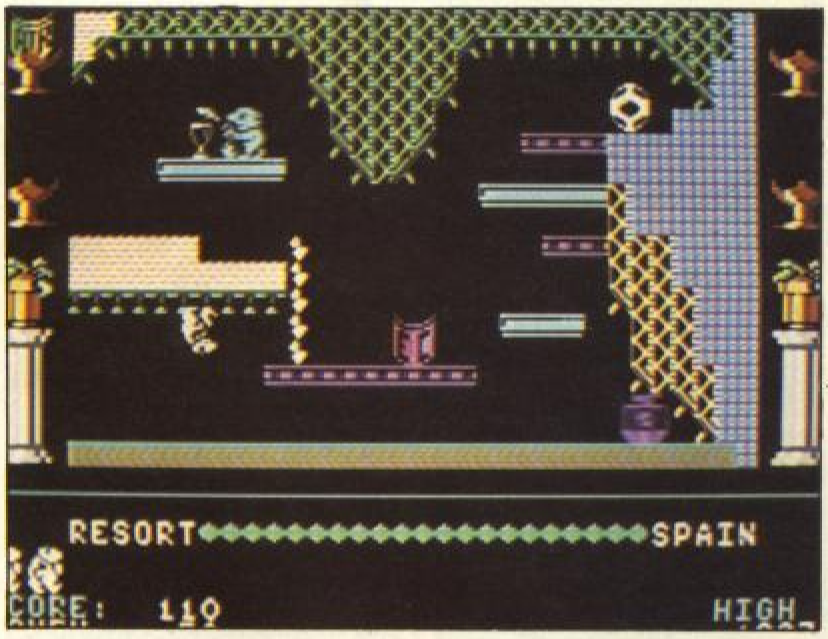
AUF WIEDERSEHEN MONTY

Gremlin Graphics, £9.99 cass, £14.99 disk, joystick or keys

Having been sent to prison for carrying out a daring raid on a South Yorkshire mining pit in *Wanted Monty Mole* and then escaping to the safety of Europe in *Monty On The Run*, the intrepid Monty Mole is back – travelling through Europe in search of enough money to purchase Montos, a secluded Greek island.

Like its immediate predecessor, *Auf Wiedersehen Monty* is a flick-screen platform game in which the player has to guide the mole around a system of screens filled with platforms and ropes. Monty is an athletic little creature and can climb, run and jump – a useful series of actions considering his environment.

Money is acquired in two ways – either by collecting Eurocheques which are scattered throughout the map, or by picking up items and dropping them off in the correct places. For example, the Mona Lisa has to be stolen, a Swiss bank account opened and a car entered into a Grand Prix.



▲ No, Monty isn't in Australia – he really can walk on the underside of platforms!



I'm all for innovation, but there's nothing remotely innovative to be found here. When it boils down to it, Manic Miner **offers as much, if not more, playability and innovation. There are more screens and platforms – but the weak gameplay offers nothing new or exciting. The bonus/intermission screen is totally pointless, and represents no challenge whatsoever. An archaic and exhausted formula with a modern price tag –** Auf Wiedersehen Monty . . . **and good riddance.**

Sometimes completing a task involves flying from one part of the map to another, which involves finding an air ticket and an airport. When Monty's standing at the airport and the Commodore key is pressed, a single cloud-filled screen is shown. Monty appears in a biplane and proceeds to follow another similar plane piloted by an Intermole agent. Touching the back of the enemy plane with the propeller destroys it, earning Monty bonus points. Another plane then appears, giving the player another chance to earn points, until the destination is reached.

Throughout his cash-raising quest, Monty is beset by the foul inhabitants of Europe. These horrors aren't like the tourists we've all come to love and adore. This type of European is mean, twisted and mutated, and either floats, patrols or leaps around a screen on a preset course, removing one of Monty's seven lives on contact.

As well as dastardly hostiles, there are deadly plungers which pound up and down randomly, electric platforms which frazzle and strangely coloured waters in which Monty drowns. Just to heap a little more misfortune on Monty's narrow shoulders, some harmless looking objects are dangerous when collected. Picking up wine bottles makes the velvety one drunk and he stumbles around randomly under his own steam until he 'sobers up'. Bad news indeed, because during this period he's more than likely to stumble into something deadly and die. Aaah . . .



I hadn't played any of the previous Monty **games (yes, I'm the one), so** Auf Wiedersehen Monty **was relatively fresh to me. Even so, I can't admit to be being overly impressed with it. The solutions to the 'puzzles' are really obscure and death arrives all too regularly, making it annoying after a while. I can appreciate the lure it must have for some people, but there seems to be little difference between this version and the last, so why bother? Try** Gods And Heroes **instead – it offers a lot more for considerably less.**



What's most disappointing is that after a year and a half the only new thing Monty Mole can offer is a little bit of breakdancing. Auf Wiedersehen Monty **isn't much of an improvement over** Monty On The Run. **It's very slick and polished, but when you get through the gloss you find that the gameplay is virtually identical, the graphics are very similar and the tune, if anything, is a regression. When** Monty On The Run **came out in 1985 it stunned us with its amazing music and pretty graphics, this time around a very similar product simply doesn't appeal. Gone is the urge to solve those incredibly obscure and devious puzzles, gone is the excitement and with it, hopefully, is that damn mole.**

PRESENTATION 73%
Generally unexciting with no options to speak of and an unimpressive title screen.

GRAPHICS 68%
Detailed, monochrome characters and colourful backdrops.

SOUND 79%
A predictable but listenable tune and simple spot effects and jingles.

HOOKABILITY 61%
Initially mildly interesting but frustrating with it.

LASTABILITY 47%
Even platform fanatics may find the action too repetitive and unrewarding.

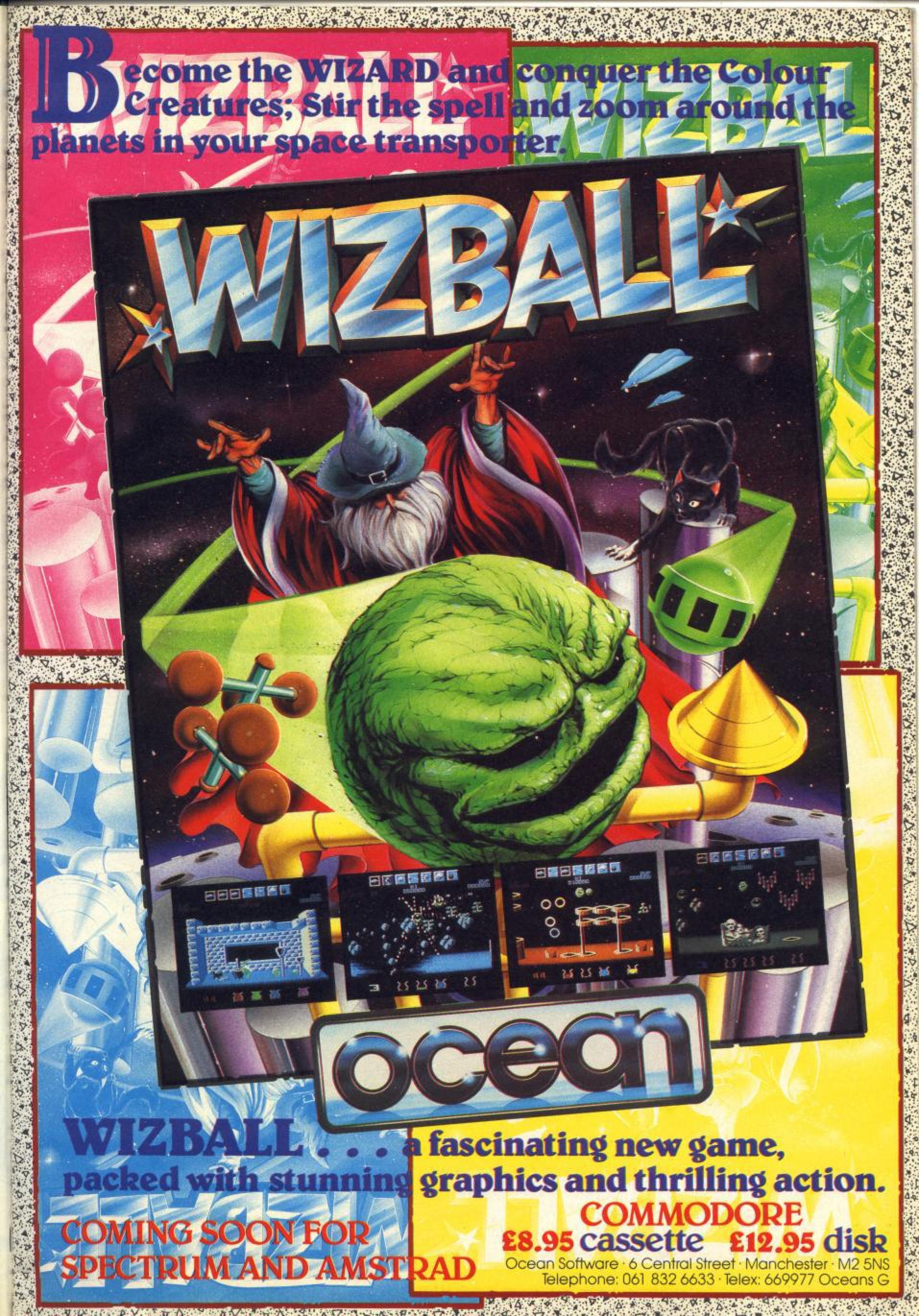
VALUE 33%
Far too much for such an ageing concept.

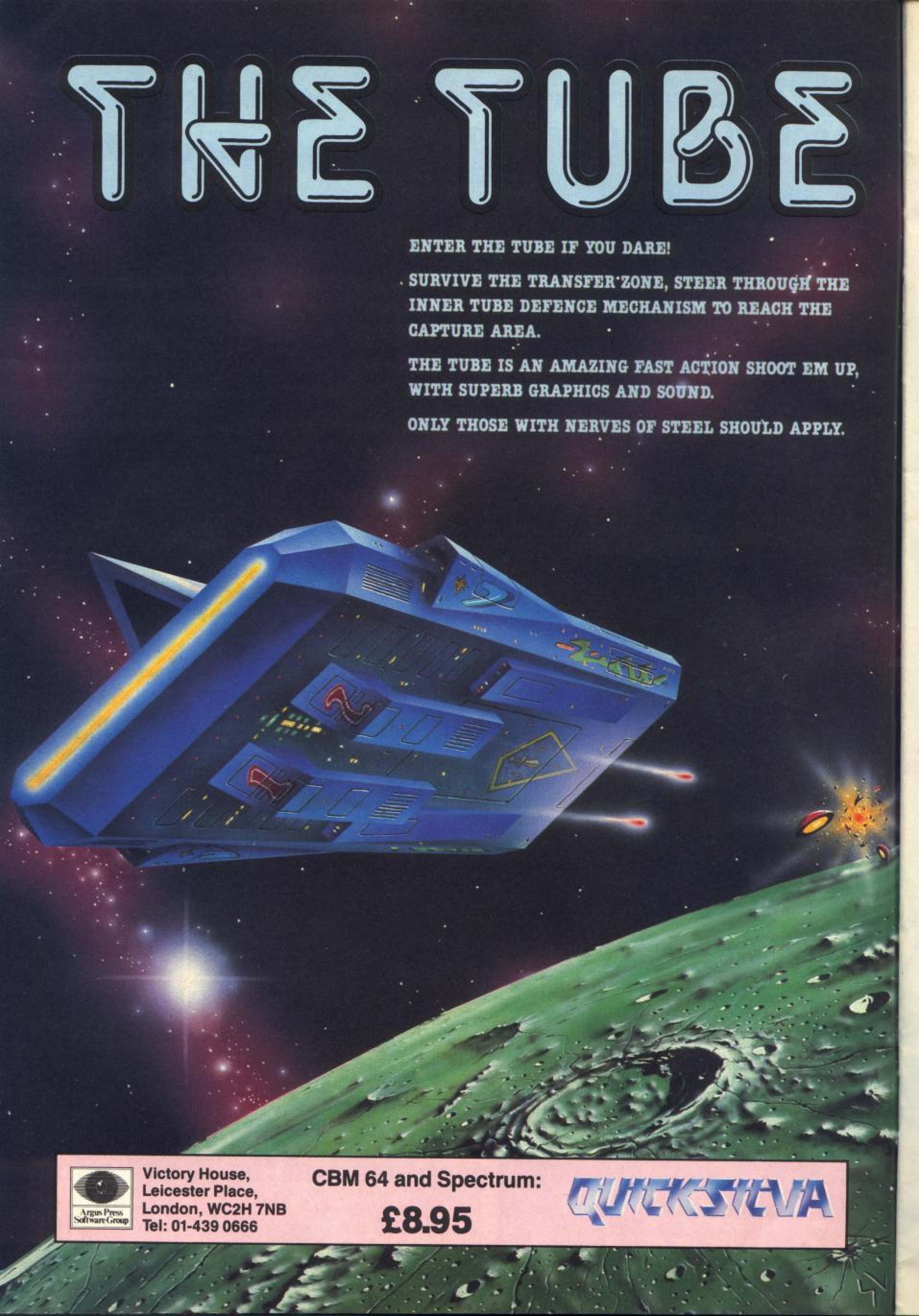
OVERALL 46%
Nothing new on offer – even the most ardent of Monty fans is likely to be disappointed.

▼ If Monty takes the air ticket, he can say Auf Wiedersehen to Luxembourg . . .






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PITFALL II

Firebird/Activision, £1.99 cass, joystick only

Stories of the Lost Caves of Machu Pichu and the curse of the Raj Diamond had always appealed to the adventurer in Pitfall Harry. Rumours that the caves had also become a depository for 28 stolen gold bars proved too much of a lure for old Pitfall who, together with his niece Rhonda and her cat Quickclaw, set off for South America.

After a hard trek through the Peruvian jungle, Harry, Rhonda and Quickclaw stumbled upon the Lost Caverns, and promptly became separated, leaving Harry to track down his companions as well as find the treasure.

In his exploration of the underground caverns and rivers, Harry wends his way past a variety of Peruvian creatures,including Condors, Bats, Poisonous Frogs, Albino Scorpions and even Electric Eels which appear in the streams, glowing with energy.

Holes appear in the tunnel floor, which Harry either jumps or drops through to a level below. Alternatively, Harry can descend the caverns using one of the many ladders which are thoughtfully provided along the way.

Dropping into rivers allows Harry to display his aquatic prowess, diving to recover submerged bars of gold, and then front-crawling his way back to the bank.

Harry is rewarded with 5,000 points for each gold bar collected, with the total score acting as an energy reserve. Contact with denizens reduces Harry's scoreline, and transports him back to the last red cross which he walked over. The further back Harry is carried, the more his score falls, and if it reaches zero he dies and his mission restarts from the beginning.

The aim of Harry's quest is to recover the Raj Diamond, and rescue Rhonda and Quickclaw.



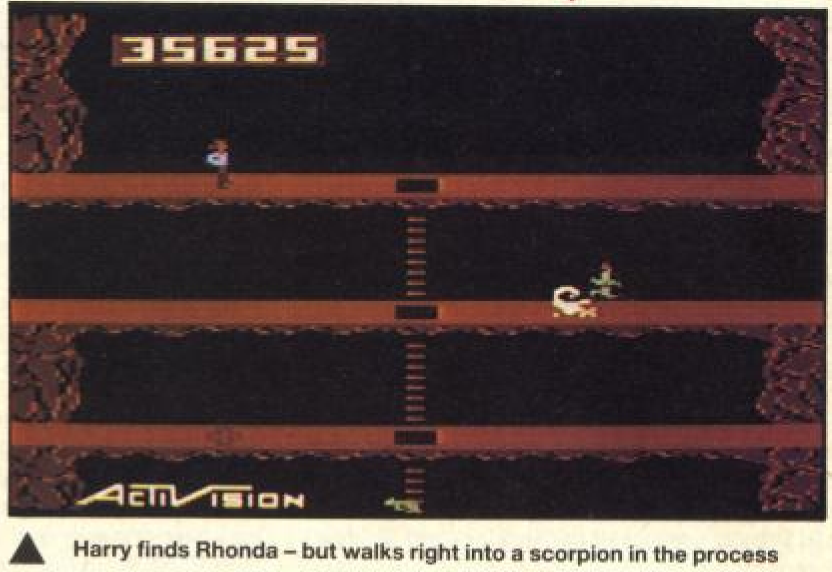
Pitfall II **features adequate graphics and sound, and incoporates many neat touches. The gameplay is a little repetitive, but bearably so – despite the fact that contact with a creature sends you back to the last first-aid cross touched, and as they are pretty thin on the ground I often found myself playing large sections of the caverns time and time again. This is particularly annoying, especially when I got quite far into the game. Not a bad buy for two quid, but there's a lot of quality budget software about this month.**



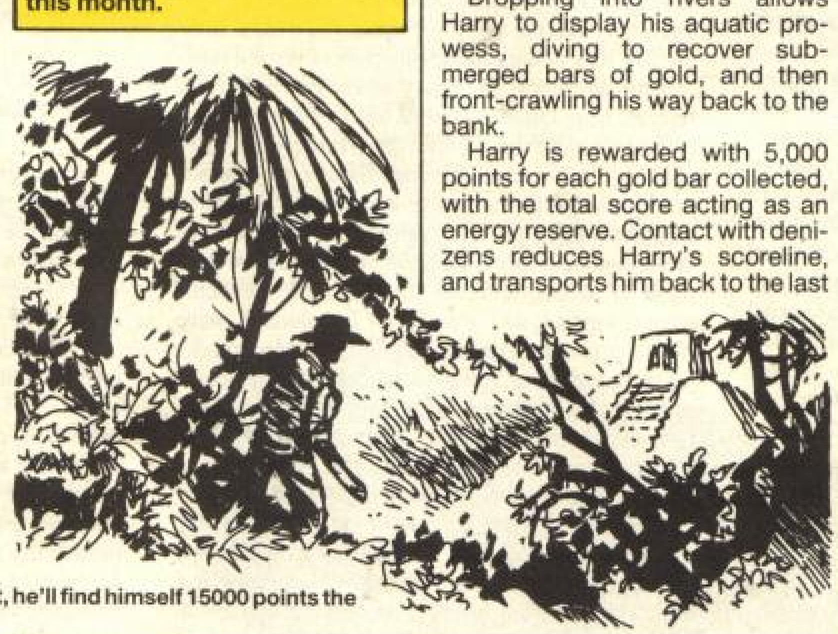
This is nothing awesome, but if you're an avid explorer looking for a plain and simple adventure to undertake then keep reading. Pitfall II **is nicely designed, mildly addictive, and pleasant on both the ears and eyes. There are a few puzzles to solve, and traps to negotiate, and there's an interesting environment to map – what more do you want for two quid?**



Old classics never die – they just get re-released. Pitfall II **isn't the jewel in Firebird's crown, but it does sparkle. It presents a reasonable long term challenge, as there is a fairly large playing area to explore and memorise. The graphics and sound aren't up to much, but the playability is there and makes it worthwhile – even if it is just for old times sake.**



▲ Harry finds Rhonda – but walks right into a scorpion in the process





▼ If Harry can find a way to the fat rat, he'll find himself 15000 points the richer

PRESENTATION 61%
Nothing special, but good enough.

GRAPHICS 62%
Repetitive, occasionally attractive and smoothly scrolling backdrops.

SOUND 31%
Grinding tune, and sparse spot effects.

HOOKABILITY 78%
A piece of cake to get into, and the urge to explore is strong.

LASTABILITY 59%
Huge playing area, but the initial compulsion fades as the action isn't continuous or overly interesting.

VALUE 71%
Sensibly priced, considering its age and limited gameplay.

OVERALL 60%
An above-average exploration game with simple problems, but it offers a good couple of weeks entertainment.

HELLO FANS! HELLO PARKING METERS. HELLO VENDING MACHINERY THAT CAN BE FOUND IN TOILETS. IN FACT HELLO TO ALL ELECTRO-MECHANICAL MACHINERY THAT MAY BE READING THESE WORDS, BECAUSE EPISODE SEVEN OF MY TALES FROM FUTURE PAST WILL BE OF SPECIAL INTEREST TO YOU. AS SOME OF YOU MAY ALREADY KNOW, MY NAME IS LOUSE #3,142, AND DUE TO A DREADFUL MISTAKE WHICH INVOLVES THE WORD "POOH!" AND A GAY NEUTRON BOMB NAMED LOUSE #007, I AM DISGUISED AS A BOIL ON THE BACKSIDE OF DUANE PIPE, A MACDONALDS TRAINEE AND NOT A BIT AS NICE AS TAMARA KNIGHT.

My old pal #007 has been put in charge of Tamara, while I rot here in the nether regions of despair, as we teleport to our trainee assignment on behalf of Macdonalds Intergalactic. The Corporation Wars have been raging for centuries now, and we are trying to prevent the Cocacolonisation of the planet Kashdispensa, formerly Earth, by setting up a planetwide system of microwave vending machines. Personally, I think the idea is asinine, as there are no humans on Kashdispensa whatsoever, but then I'm not paid to think. I'm not paid at all. Unless you count these weird bits of paper signed by the legendary Krey Twins, Oliver and Franco, servants of the dreaded Lord Sendusa Fax.

This planet is incredibly ugly. Duane fits in perfectly. Its entire surface is covered in plasticrete, whose entire surface is covered in graffiti, and its entire population consists of vending machines. There are squillions of them. Chocolate bar dispensers in what used to be Switzerland, Softee-Ice nozzles all over some place named Napoli, fag machines in San Francisco, whereas here in a forgotten, damp little corner called Britain, there's nothing but utterly useless gambling devices. Apparently it all began long, long ago, when your mytholgical goddess Maggot Hatcher demanded impossible sacrifices from her worshippers. After selling off things like gas, oil, telephone conversations, justice, health and air, she dispensed with people altogether, replacing them with much more efficient machines. And these machines were happy as Larry, trading in bits of paper signed by the Krey Twins, which had no real value, and voting for the goddess Hatcher in a peculiar sexual rite called a General Erection. Larry wasn't too happy, mind. He was turned into hardcore, and the phosphorous from his brain became part of the random number generator circuit in a Bingo machine.

"Here I am, the most intelligent entity on this entire planet and my prime function is as a bog attendant"

I expect you are wondering why I haven't mentioned going to the toilet yet. After all it is the most common motivator in every episode so far. Apart from gratuitous sex and violence. Well how can I disappoint you, here goes, it's toilet time again. Duane Pipe has two legs, one beneath each of his scaberous buttocks. These legs are gooseberry-haired stumpy columns which bow outwards like a pair of curled brackets either side of a very small percentage symbol. It is this part of his anatomy which he clutches as he hops from one gooseberry-haired stumpy leg to the other. As I tell this telling tale to you he is ripping loose a buttock blaster comprising 17% sulphur dioxide, 24% methane, 11% politician and 48% cruelty to underclothing. "Pooh!" says Tamara. I curse the armaments designer who equipped me with scent analysis I curse my revolting pimply host for jiggling about and making me feel queasy as a vegetarian in a French kiss and I curse forty four word sentences without any punctuation in them. The idiot boy is asking me where the nearest wee-wee house is. Imagine it, here I am, the most intelligent entity upon this entire planet and my prime function is as a bog attendant. And what is worse, I don't know the answer.

"Try that machine over there, Duane, you incontinent little rat." I direct him to one of the more abused wall dispensers. "This don't look like a urinal" he whines, "It's too far off the ground." "Then stand on tip-toe, and aim high. And hurry up before all this lavatorial effluent is sub-edited out." There is a sign above the wall-machine, in flaking ancient English, but some of the letters have been erased yet the March of Time over passing centuries, not to mention the shoddy workmanship of Di Young, an itinerant Welsh Letrasign adherent, who lived to be 86, and spend the twighlight of his days addicted to the glue on the back of the letter 'K'. The sign reads 'ACCES-C--D--ASH-D-SPEN-ER'. Naturally for a being endowed with my great intelligence, it takes me a nanosecond to computer that this machine is a bodily waste disposal unit, of the disintegrator beam type, common in the Armitage-Shanks Nebula. The sign must have originally read 'ACCESS CRUD SLASH DISPENSER', in that charming directness beloved of the ancient Britons.

"All those years of Macdonalds potty training are about to pay off . . . "

"But I don't know how to use it Louse, and I'm bursting! Come on, you're supposed to be my personal advisory unit, so advise me, and hurry up!" Tamara is walking away in disgust, and what a stinking gust it is, in the general direction of serried ranks of fruit machines. My heart aches the further she retreats from Duane's stink. I had better advise him fast before I lose sight of my wonderful heroine. "Just read the instructions, Duane, these computerised urinals always have a display screen and a keypad to help idiots like you." He jiggles about in front of the Slashpoint, and sure enough, its protective glass front panel is sliding upwards to reveal my predicted screen, keypad, and a couple of functional looking slots. I just hope that all those years of Macdonalds potty training are about to pay off. The machine springs to life and issues its first instruction: 'INSERT CARD'. Duane is completely bewildered of course, not having the intelligence to master Ancient English, let alone to go to the toilet unaided.

Now I am advising him to put his identity card in the appropriate slot. I mean, the Brits can't have any old life-form voiding their bladders hereabouts, can they. He is inserting his card, and jiggling about with alarming force. 'ENTER PERSONAL ACCESS NUMBER' glows the instruction on the little monochromatic VDU. So that's what they called Privates in the old days! How quaint?! I have to explain this to the imbecilic Duane Pipe, who has the audacity to doubt my superior intellect before obeying the machine's command. 'KEY IN AMOUNT REQUIRED'. Duane actually manages to tap out 'Number Ones' all on his own. 'ENTER DEPOSIT OR WITHDRAWAL'. Well, gentle reader, there is no need for me to tell you exactly what is taking place at this moment, but the machine is flashing up its chemical analysis of Duane's deposit with the simple verdict 'MALFUNCTION', which I can certainly confirm. His functions are rotten.

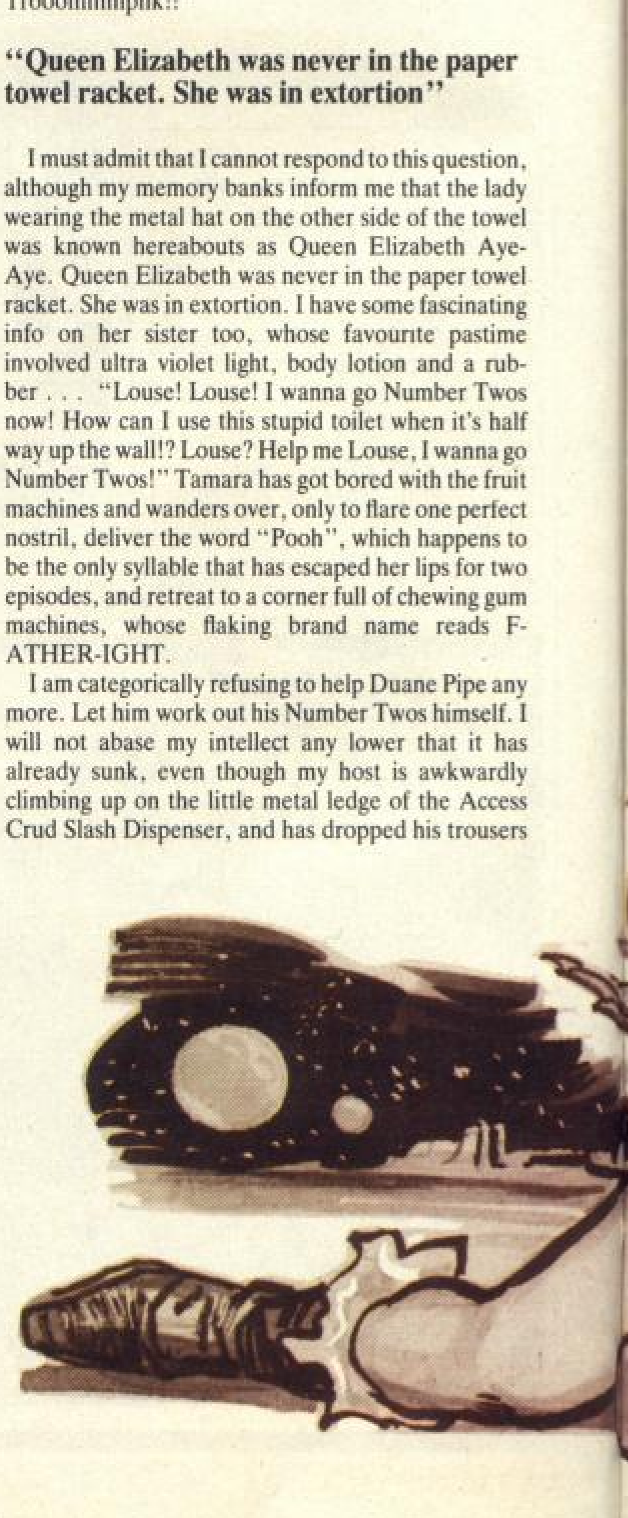
Duane heaves "Ho", a satisfied sigh of relief, and turns away from the Access Crud Dispenser, but I am not letting him get away with that. "Young man!" I telepathically reprimand him, "Wash your hands at once! And shame on you, you dirty little beast. Look for the the soil dispersal beam before you indulge in nose picking or any other of your favourite foul hobbies!" Listen to him mutter obscenities under his breath, which also stinks. Watch him slouch back to the machine, round shouldered, squareheaded, bracket legged, the percentage symbol shrunk to an umlaut. If I had not discovered that God was nothing but an egocentric rock'n'roll Compact Disc half way through Episode Three, I would pray to him now for deliverance from this torture of forced symbiosis with a moron.

The cretin has managed to decipher the current message scrolling up the machines's weeny screen, which states that Duane must await a receipt for his deposit. Things must have been horrifically beaurocratic in late Twentieth Century Britain if they gave receipts every time you went wee wee. As Duane waves his hands in front of the horizontal hand-cleanser slot, several small paper towels are ejected from it. How incredibly primitive! They are rather shiny and I would thought them unsuitable to absorb surplus moisture, but they are quite pretty, imprinted with ancient runes and portraits of domestic gods. "Who's this 'orrible looking git on the towels, Louse?" asks Duane, in that charming snivel of his. I analyse the portrait, and search my prehistoric history data banks. Naturally I am able to answer, "His image coincides with a two-dimensional representation of The Duke of Wellington, a great British war leader." "Yeah?!" sneers Duane, blowing his nostril contents into the little kerchief, "Well if he's so great, how come he wound up in the paper towel racket? Trooommmphk!!"

"Queen Elizabeth was never in the paper towel racket. She was in extortion"

I must admit that I cannot respond to this question, although my memory banks inform me that the lady wearing the metal hat on the other side of the towel was known hereabouts as Queen Elizabeth Aye-Aye. Queen Elizabeth was never in the paper towel racket. She was in extortion. I have some fascinating info on her sister too, whose favourite pastime involved ultra violet light, body lotion and a rubber . . . "Louse! Louse! I wanna go Number Twos now! How can I use this stupid toilet when it's half way up the wall!? Louse? Help me Louse, I wanna go Number Twos!" Tamara has got bored with the fruit machines and wanders over, only to flare one perfect nostril, deliver the word "Pooh", which happens to be the only syllable that has escaped her lips for two episodes, and retreat to a corner full of chewing gum machines, whose flaking brand name reads F-ATHER-IGHT.

I am categorically refusing to help Duane Pipe any more. Let him work out his Number Twos himself. I will not abase my intellect any lower that it has already sunk, even though my host is awkwardly climbing up on the little metal ledge of the Access Crud Slash Dispenser, and has dropped his trousers



to facilitate the screen's 'ENTER DEPOSIT AMOUNT' request. I am not going to warn him about the anti-vandalism protection built in to the machine. Let him find out for himself.

There is an ominous whirring of gears from within the wall cavity, and my smoke registers an interesting combination of silicon fusion and catalytic dung. What is about to happen gives a whole new meaning to the word disaster, with the insertion of the letter 'r' after the 'a' and an 'e' after the 's'. The glass protection panel slices downwards with a smoothness and rapidity reminiscent of the guillotine, but this is no time to lose your head. Duane's eyes widen in reverse proportion to his newly streamline backside, and as I fall to the cracked pavestone of ancient Earth, still disguised as a buttock boil, I am observing a sight that will haunt me for the rest of my life, or until the end of the next paragraph. Whichever comes the sooner.

"The last thing which is recognisably Duane Pipe is his dislodged right eye. A strange sight . . . "

The sixteen year-old living carcass of Duane Pipe is being sucked into the left-hand slot of the Dispenser, starting at the lower bowel, and unravelling like surprised spaghetti, from the inside out. The slot measures 55 millimeters wide by 2 millimetres high, and up until seventeen seconds ago, Duane was a normal round shouldered slob weighing 69 kilos. At this very moment his starboard kidney is doing beached fish impressions, flapping and leaping on the pavement, rather prettily in my opinion, and now disappearing down a gutter drain to begin a new career as a rat snack. His teeth are being expelled from the Duke of Wellington paper towel dispenser slot, and land neatly on top of each of the alphanumeric keys, in the sort of coincidence that will be familiar to readers of this story. His blood spurts from the Receipt Slot in a single arc of parabolic perfection, instantly being converted to one long sizzling black pudding, due to the fact that the slot glows white hot. For the first time since I have made his acquaintance the young man smells not unpleasant. The last thing which is recognisably Duane Pipe is his dislodged right eye. A strange sight, which now vapourises into a decorative spherical shower of tiny globules with a sound which is very similar to the ancient British word for intimate congress.

"The only gay neutron bomb in existence, due to his AC/DC converter being fitted back to front by an Austin-Rover robot with Altzheimer's Disease . . . "

The heat generated by this amusing incident is causing the buttock slice on which I am resident to sizzle more than somewhat, accompanied by the mouth-watering smell of frying bacon. Tamara wanders over and peers down at me, wrinkling her perfect nose, and uttering her inevitable "Pooh!". Hang on a second, I am receiving a message from Louse #007, which may prove critical to my entire future. While Tamara wonders if she should report the heresy of a slice of fried bacon on the pavement of a Macdonalds-only planet, #007 is telling me that he has fallen in love! This I cannot take! #007 has always been the only gay neutron bomb in existence, due to his AC/DC converter being fitted back to front by an antique Austin-Rover robot with Altzheimer's Disease, so how can he have fallen for my own true heart's desire, the incomparable Tamara Knight? If I was a human being I'd kill myself. As it is, I'll kill my former buddy #007.

"Don't be a silly-billy', warbles #007, "it's not Tamara that makes me go all weak at the interface, it's him over there!" He sends a microwave beam of delight in the direction of a fruit machine hanging on the opposite wall, which responds by waving its shiny chrome handle in a highly provocative yet pleasantly erotic manner. "Just look at his well-oiled gears, and those beautiful Nudge'n'Hold buttons, and when he spins his cherries, well #3.142, my atomic pile goes quite critical. You must help me, please! I want to take a chance on love, and Macdonalds can go take a flying fondle at a rolling doughnut!" I think I know what's coming next. Oh joy, oh bliss, oh Tamara, soon you and I will be one again.

#007 implants a low-level auto suggestion in Tamara's mind, and she picks up the hot slice of Duane from the pavement. Like a sleepwalker, she takes this pitiful remnant of my former host over to the one-armed bandit, who introduces himself as Lovely If Battered Electronic Random Access Client Entertainer, or LIBERACE for short, and thanks me from the bottom of his jackpot for the service I am about to render him and his new-found paramour. In less time it takes for a right eyeball to vapourise Tamara plucks #007 from her perfect skin, and pops him into Liberace's moistened coin slot. I have never seen such happy machinery in my artificial life, and I am sure that you will join me in wishing them a long and fruitful symbiosis together. May they respect one another, and always remember the words of the appropriately christened Francis Bacon, "It is impossible to love and be wise" (Essays, 1625 AD, Kashdispensarian, formerly Ancient British Earthling).

Now Tamara is picking me out of the congealed fat of what she thinks is a slice of smoked streaky, and holding me up for examination. "Tamara! My own sweet love, I have been waiting for this moment for sixteen years! At last we can begin our life together all over again! It's me, your own sweet Louse, ready to become your man with a smallish moustache and some leisureware." She peers at me, sniffs me, thinks for a moment, mutters "Pooh!", and with a disdainful flick of her perfect wrist towards the longest black pudding on the planet Kashdispensa, formerly Earth, she tosses me away.

DON'T MISS PART EIGHT OF THIS AWARD-WINNING SAGA (THE TYPESETTER WHO WROTE '24' INSTEAD OF THE MATHEMATICAL FORMULA FOR 'BALLS' IN EPISODE SIX IS NOW CONFINED TO A WARD), WHEREIN I INVENT A MACHINE WHICH IS GUARANTEED TO MAKE YOU DIE LAUGHING, AND TAMARA KNIGHT LEARNS A BRAND NEW WORD.

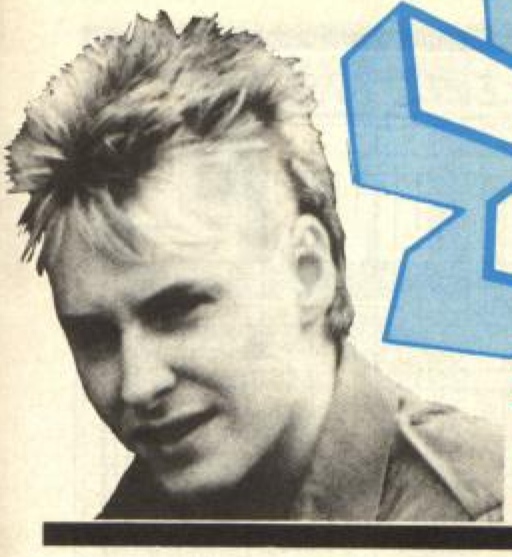
TO BE CONTINUED . . .



By Mel Croucher


AT FIRST I THOUGHT UH, UH, I'VE NO CHANCE . . .
BUT THEN I BECAME . . .
MAGMAX
Nichibutsu
. . . A POWERHOUSE OF A ROBOT BUILDING UP INTO AN AWESOME FIGHTING MACHINE THAT CAN COPE WITH ALMOST ANYTHING – IN THE RIGHT HANDS! NICHIBUTSU'S ARCADE THRILLER SPILLS OUT OF YOUR HOME COMPUTER WITH DEVASTATING GRAPHICS AND EXPLOSIVE ACTION – JUST LIKE THE COIN-OP HOT SHOT!
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Julian Rignall



ZZAP! TIPS

Ever since the first reset POKE was published there have been many enquiries from readers asking how to reset the Commodore. There's always the patent Liddon technique which involves putting a paperclip to one of the pins along the expansion port, but unfortunately you have to have a steady hand and know exactly which pin to go for – touching the wrong one blows up the Commodore . . .

However, there is a cheap and safe alternative – a professional reset switch. It's already been pointed out that the best reset switches are available on cartridges such as Quickdisk Plus and Trilogic Expert, but they're far, far too expensive if all you want to do use them for is to enter POKEs. The ideal thing for the job is one of the simple and cheap reset switches that are listed below. I've seen them and they're all of high quality. If you're interested, send your order to the relevant company, *not* to ZZAP! It's nothing to do with us.

One of the best reset switches. Fits neatly into the cartridge port and allows the user to switch out the area that is normally used to protect against a reset. Also on board is an 8K EPROM holder that can be switched into one of three different memory locations. The board comes with full documentation and two stabilisers and costs £8.00 (including postage and packaging) from **TURBOTRONIC, 46 Ripon Street, Parkinson Lane, Halifax, W Yorks HX1 3UG**

Smart looking, solidly constructed and highly effective cartridge port reset switch. Costs £4.95 including postage and packing from **HOBBIES EXCHANGE, 16 Wharf Street, Sowerby Bridge, Halifax HX6 2AE**

Home-made serial port reset switch. Effective on all Commodores. £3.25 including postage and packing from **S SHARMA, 235 Charlbury Road, Wollaton, Nottingham NG8 1NF**

Solid, home-made, serial port reset switch. A refund if it doesn't work with your Commodore. Comes with instructions and costs £3.00 including postage and packing from **STEPHEN GRAY, 11 Wyncroft Gardens, Lisburn, Co Antrim, N Ireland BT28 2AU**

Well constructed serial port reset switch. Only £2.49 including postage and packing; available from **A D ELECTRONICS, 131 Shakespeare Road, Fleetwood, Lancashire FY7 7HH**

DELTA (Thalamus)

If you're a shoot 'em up fan and haven't bought yourself a copy of this yet, you ought to be ashamed of yourself. Personally I thought it deserved a much higher percentage than it was awarded, but that's what comes of working in a model democracy. If you've got a copy and are having trouble conquering the higher levels make use of the following listing from Z Kelemen who lives at Ranunkelgrand 48, Tyreso, Sweden. All you have to do is insert a rewound *Delta* cassette into the C2N (for nothing else will do), key in the program, RUN it and press play on tape to load the program with unlimited spaceships.

```
10 FOR I=53186 TO 53262:READ A:POKE
I,A:NEXT:SYS 53186
20 DATA 169, 234, 141, 40, 3, 169, 207, 141, 41, 3,
133, 157, 169, 1, 170, 168, 32, 186, 255, 169, 0
30 DATA 32, 189, 255, 32, 213, 255, 169, 245, 141,
237, 2, 169, 207, 141, 238, 2, 76, 81, 3, 169, 49
40 DATA 141, 159, 2, 169, 234, 141, 160, 2, 96, 169,
2, 141, 206, 1, 169, 208, 141, 207, 1, 76, 0
50 DATA 237, 169, 193, 141, 161, 63, 169, 60, 141,
162, 63, 76, 235, 2
```

PAPERBOY (Elite)

I've had a couple of complaints about the *Paperboy* unlimited lives listing that was printed a couple of issues ago. Apparently it didn't work, a fact which I find odd, because the printed listing works fine when tested out on our Commodores here at the office. Anyway, here's an alternate tried-and-tested, perfectly-working program for you to try out which similarly gives unlimited lives. Type in the program, RUN it, type LOAD and press play on tape (making sure that there's a rewound copy of the cassette in there).

```
10 FOR X=0 TO 28:READ Z:POKE20100+X,Z:NEXT
20 DATA 169, 4, 141, 49, 8, 185, 149, 78, 153, 52, 4,
136, 208, 247, 76, 13, 8, 169, 96
30 DATA 141, 166, 41
40 DATA 141, 107, 40
50 DATA 76, 52, 8, 0
```

When the computer resets, type POKE 1012,78:RUN (RETURN) to load the rest of the program with lots and lots of Paperboys. Many thanks to Karl Brown of St Austell, Cornwall for that.

YAK'S PROGRESS (Llamasoft)

This is definitely one of the best compilations available, containing two of my all-time favourites – *Ancipital* and *Sheep In Space* (I forgot about those when we did that 'favourite games' thing at Christmas). If you've got a copy and fancy some unlimited lives, simply follow these Jim Blackler instructions:

There are two different kinds of loaders and consequently there is need for two different methods to enter the POKEs:

METHOD A

Type LOAD to load the first part. When the cursor appears enter . . .

POKE 1014,102:POKE 1015,254:RUN (RETURN)

. . . to load the next part. When the computer resets for the second time enter the POKEs as indicated.

METHOD B

Type LOAD to load the first part. When the cursor appears enter . . .

POKE 1014,102:POKE 1015,254:RUN (RETURN)

. . . to load the next part. When the computer resets again enter the following . . .

POKE 816,167:POKE 817,2:POKE 2251,102:POKE 2252,254:RUN (RETURN)

. . . to load the last part. When the cursor appears again enter the POKEs as indicated.

MATRIX
Use Method A

POKE 7709,173:RUN (RETURN)
For infinite lives

LASER ZONE
Use Method B

POKE 4968,177:RUN (RETURN)
For infinite lasers

ATTACK OF THE MUTANT CAMELS
Use Method B

POKE 7542,165:POKE 8247,165:POKE 7551,165:POKE7562,165:RUN (RETURN)
For infinite ships

REVENGE OF THE MUTANT CAMELS
Use Method A

POKE 32927,165:RUN (RETURN)
For infinite camels

HOVVER BOVVER
Use Method A

POKE 14698,165:POKE 14928,165:RUN (RETURN)
For infinite mowers

ANCIPITAL
Use Method A

POKE 16798,173:RUN (RETURN)
For infinite Cippies

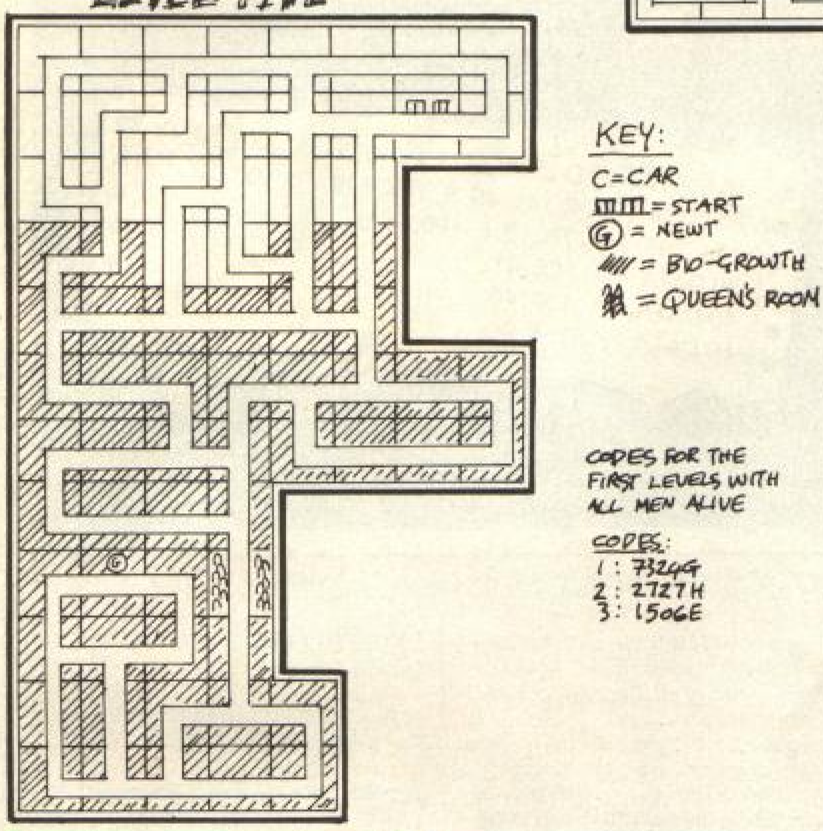
METAGALACTIC LLAMAS BATTLE AT THE EDGE OF TIME
Use Method A

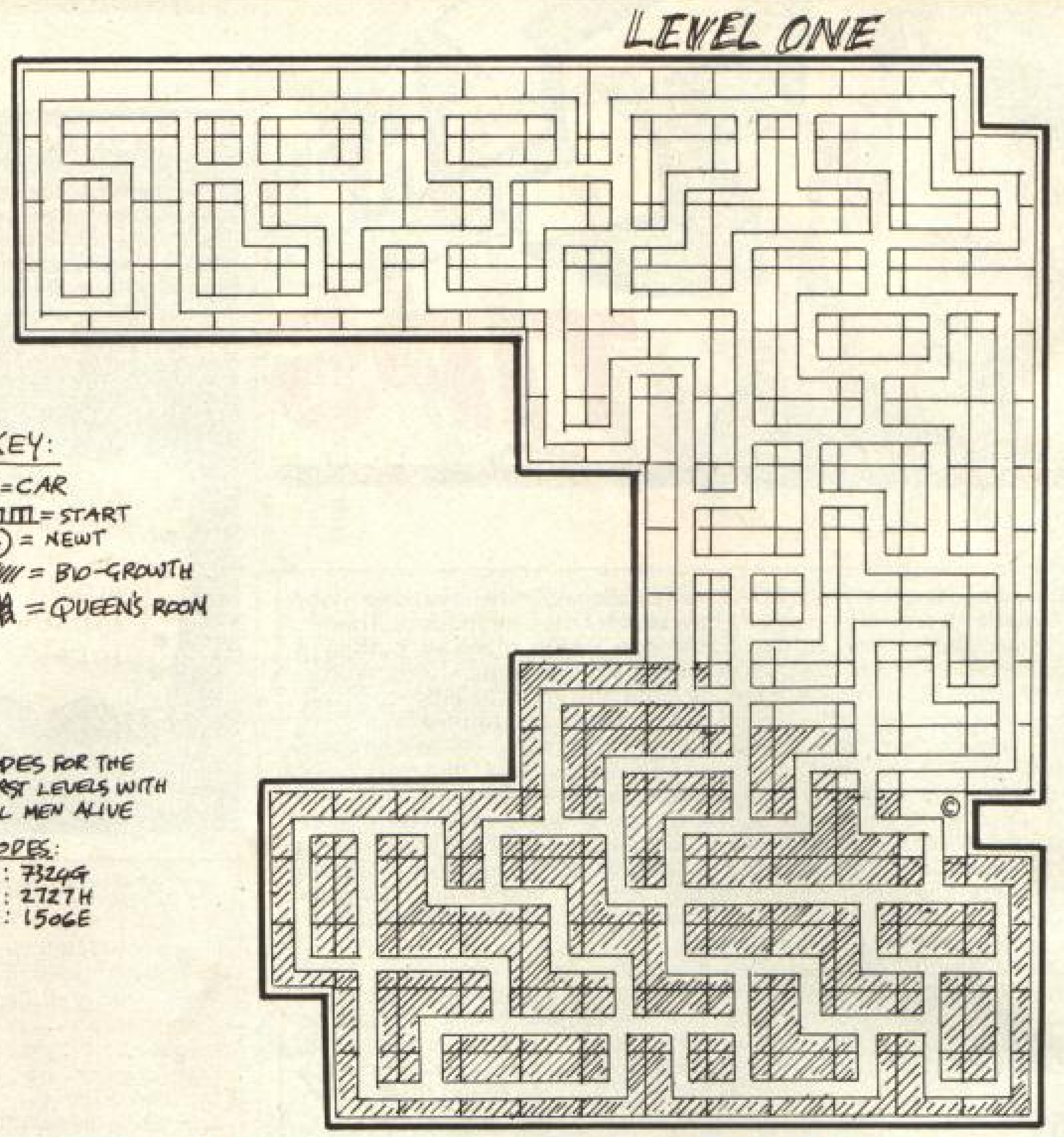
POKE 5490,165:POKE 5546,165:RUN (RETURN)
For infinite Llamas

SHEEP IN SPACE
Use Method A

POKE 30054,173:RUN
For infinite sheep

aliens





ALIENS (Activision)

If you haven't seen this in the cinema get the video – it's one of the best sci-fi films of all time. It's shame the game isn't as good. Ah well, you can't win them all. Here are some codes from Spotty of Newcastle to help you get onto the later screens – just type one in when prompted.

2727H
6106H
20216
1000A
5443F

FIRETRACK (Electric Dreams)

Fans of this great vertically scrolling shoot 'em up prepare to spread your fingers. The cheat modes, as supplied by the mysterious author, Orlando, are here.

Pressing RIGHT SHIFT, SPACE and LEFT ARROW as you start the game puts the program into Atari VCS mode, complete with fat sprites – humorous indeed. A 'real' cheat mode which puts you at the start of the last world with seven lives is accessed by pressing LEFT ARROW, NINE and SPACE as you start the game. There are also a couple of other cheat modes, but you'll have to find them for yourselves . . .

POD (Mastertronic)

This is a really superb game – no self-respecting shoot 'em up fan should be without a copy. Jim Blackler of Lancaster is a self-respecting shoot 'em up fan who has been rummaging about and has come up with a couple of POKEs to further enhance the enjoyment of playing. First of all type:

POKE 43,255:LOAD (RETURN)

To load the first part of the program. When the cursor appears enter the following . . .

SYS 888:POKE 49218,248:POKE 49219,252:SYS49152

. . . to load the rest of the program. When the computer resets enter any of the following:

POKE 26364,173
For infinite lives

POKE 8613,0
For extra speed

POKE 8673,173
For a still display (makes things clearer)

POKE 9335,0
For autofire on both players

When you've made your changes SYS 26112 to restart the program.

BOMBJACK II (Elite)

Jack must have taken a slimming course since his last program – he's not half as fat as he was before. Thin or fat, I bet some of you could do with more of him, so here are some extra lives POKEs courtesy of the Z-Squad of Wigan. Type LOAD (RETURN) and press play on tape. When the READY prompt appears type POKE 1010,0:RUN (RETURN) and wait for the computer to reset.

When the familiar blue screen appears, POKE 2098,0:RUN (RETURN) to load the next part. The computer will reset again, allowing you to enter:

POKE 15711,(1-250)
Number of lives

And SYS 39712 to start the game with lots of Jacks.

UP 'N' DOWN (US Gold)

This is scraping the barrel a bit, but for those of you who never conquered the later levels here are some infinite lives POKEs courtesy of Jim Blackler, The Lancastrian laddie. To set the ball rolling, or rather the program loading type LOAD (not SHIFT/RUN STOP, type L O A D (RETURN) otherwise it won't work). When the cursor appears type:

POKE 1011, 102:POKE 1012,254:RUN (RETURN)

To load the next part, enter the following when the computer resets. . .

POKE 36103, 173: SYS 32768 (RETURN)

. . . to run the program with an unlimited amount of cars. Have fun and lots of crashes.

SPLIT PERSONALITIES (Domark)

Who is Zilog? Nobody knows, but he's sent in some unlimited lives POKES for those of you who've never seen the later screens of this great puzzle game. Load the program and reset the 64 (by the way, no more complaints about the abundance of reset POKEs – there are now cheap reset switches on offer, so you've got no excuse not to be able to enter them). Enter the following

POKEs for unlimited lives:

POKE 7033,234
POKE 7034,234
POKE 7035,234

And if you'd like to start on a different level

POKE 16599,(level 0-9)

And POKE 2050,234:SYS 13165 to restart the program.

TIPS

NEMESIS (Konami)

Thanks to all of you who've written in with this tip – I must have had hundreds of letters. If you're one of the two people who've failed to discover the cheat mode and could do with some help, simply depress the SHIFT LOCK and press the space bar until a block or letter appears in the top left hand corner of the screen. When this happens play the game as normal and you'll automatically go into cheat mode with no sprite/sprite collision. Bo-o-o-ring . . .

CHOLO (Firebird)

Here are a few codes as found by the nouveau numero uno housewife's choice, Steve Jarratt. When you bump into the relevant robot simply type in the corresponding codeword to take it over.

REBELS: RIZZO
PLUGIN: IGOR
BRAZIL: ANNEKA
PHILBY: SKUM 01
MCLEAN: SKUM 02

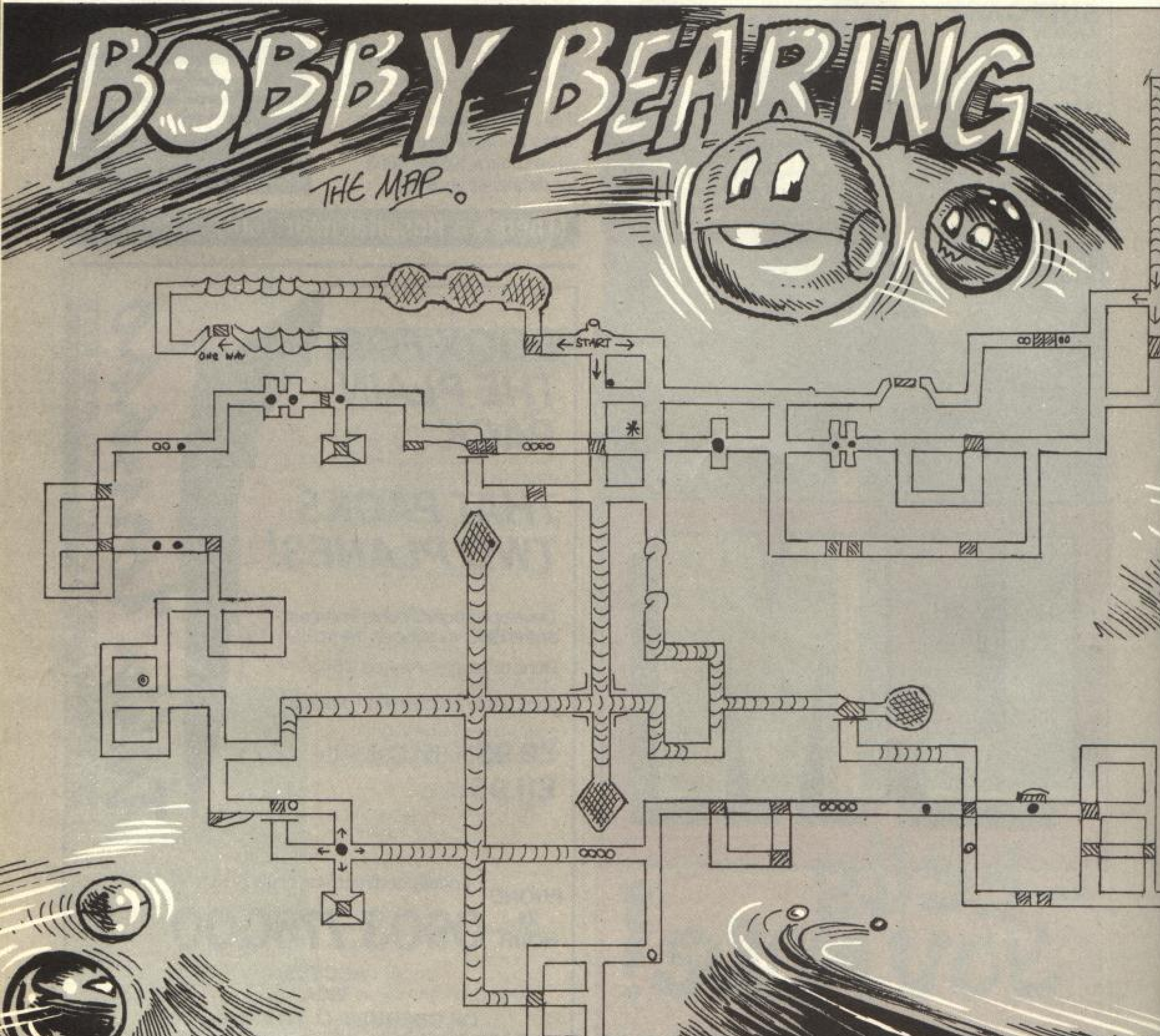
KRAKOUT (Gremlin Graphics)

A few of you disagreed with our review of this up-ended *Breakout* variant – some quite violently, lacing their arguments with colourful and unprintable metaphors. It seems that *Arkanoid*'s higher marks are the general cause of upset. It's all down to personal taste – and I'm sure there are many who prefer the arcade conversion. Oh well, forget the arguments, load the program and reset the computer so that you can enter the following . . .

POKE 35220,200
For unlimited bats

POKE 32885,129
To put the game into 'boredom mode' and remove all the sprites

When you've made your changes SYS 16035 (RETURN) to restart the program. Many thanks to Lars Nielsen from 3060 Espergaerde, Denmark. By the way, how do you say thanks in Danish?



FUTURE KNIGHT (Gremlin Graphics)

Having trouble completing this tricky arcade adventure? Never fear, for help is at hand – courtesy of the chivalrous Phil Buckley, **who lives at Wilsted in Bedfordshire. This is the complete solution and should be used in conjunction with the map which was printed over the last two issues. By the way, if you're still having trouble, hold down keys** B U G 8 7 **at the title screen stage to put the program into unlimited knight mode.**

On level A you'll find a Safe Pass which should be taken before progressing to level B. When you reach this level don't take the first exit you see, but go up and enter the second one. There's a Bomb lying around which can be exploded to get rid of the hostiles, but if you use it make sure that you retain the Safe Pass!

Progress through to the next level and take the only exit to level E. Progress again to F. The Confusion Element is found here, and although not essential can be picked up and used to gain extra points. Progress to the next level (ignore the Platform Key for now) and navigate the moving platforms until you reach the exit to level G.

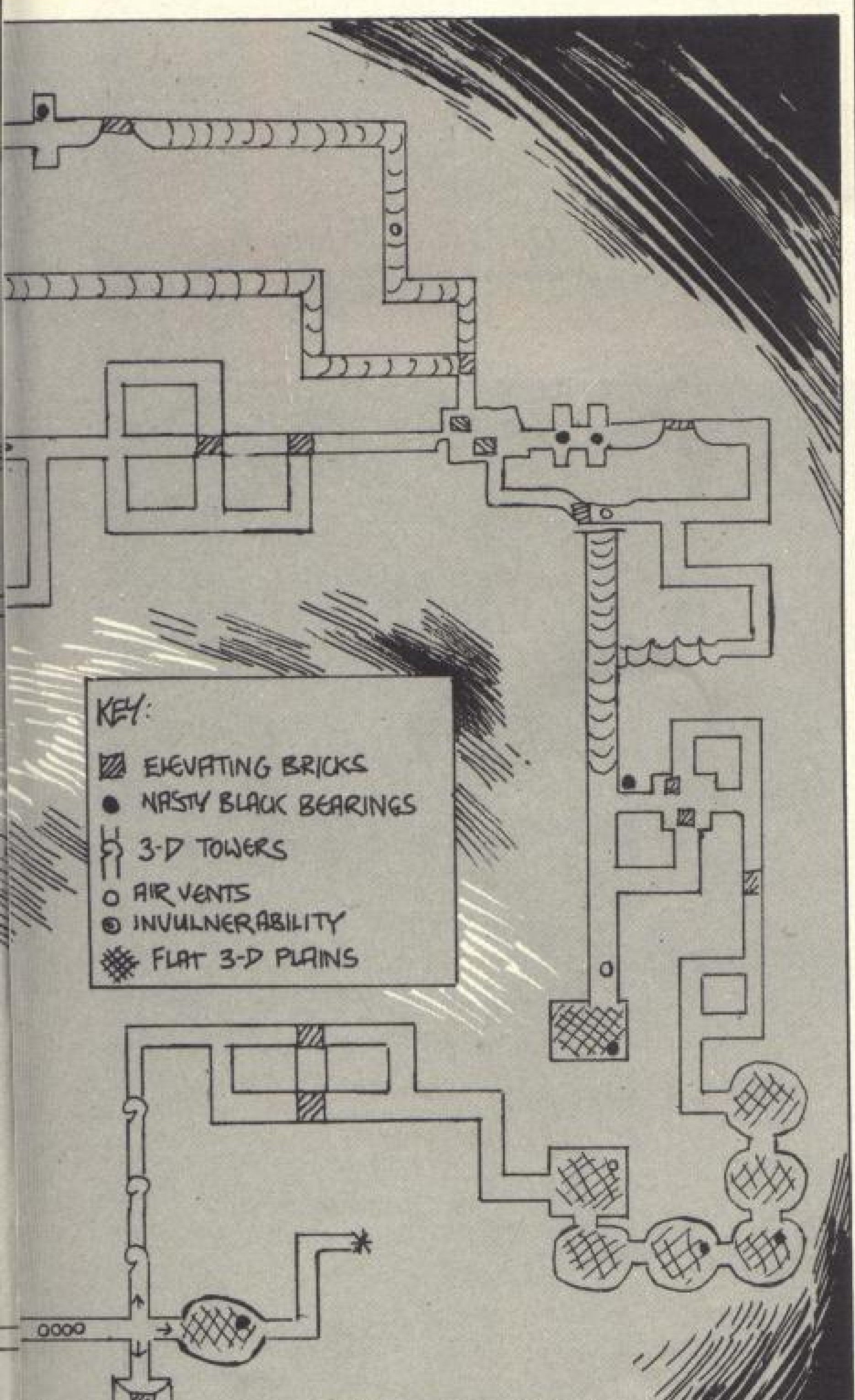
Exit and journey right to the final hole (if you're travelling on the top), drop down and swap your Pass for the Securokey. Retreat to the previous level, and when you're standing on one of the wobbly blocks press the space bar to make the whole screen distort. Return to the previous level and pick up the Safe Pass. Now make your way to the exit and enter to level H. Go down to the bottom of this level and use the Safe Pass. An exit magically appears, but don't go through it straight away. Instead return to the previous screen and collect the Platform Key. Return to the newly formed exit and enter . . .

Position yourself opposite the Exit Pass and press the space bar (to use the Platform Key). A platform appears from thin air allowing you to cross the gap and retrieve the Exit Pass. Go all the way back to level B and take the exit to C. Fall down using the slides and go to D. Hold down the space bar and the printer displays 'object used'. There is no apparent reaction, but if you walk right a previously hidden exit appears, and can be used to leave the ship and enter the forest . . .

The forest section has only three areas, and the only object needed to progress to the castle is the Release Spell which is found on the floor of level B of the planet surface. Using the exit at the end of the third level transports the knight to the dungeons . . .

This is the trickiest part of the quest. The dungeons are very nasty and have exits which lead around in circles. Go to the top of level A and go through the exit. Find the Glove and swap your Spell for it. Now use the Glove and pick up the Spell again.

Through a system of trial-and-error, enter and re-enter exits until the knight reaches a level with a RED background. When this level is reached exchange the Release Spell for the Destructor Spell. Cross the massive lava pool by jumping from one block to another and go right down to the bottom of the level until a room with a banister is reached. Now a giant Henchodroid appears – press the space bar to kill it. When it's well and truly dead return to the Release Spell and collect it. Climb onto the banister, press space, and leave the computer on all night for your family to gaze in awe . . .



SHAO-LIN'S ROAD (The Edge)

Heeeeere's Tim **and** Ian Fraser**. Yes, the Ruislip lads are back again with a listing to depress your fingers with. This one turns young Lee into a completely invincible super-kung-fu-freak. All you have to do is type in the listing, check it to make sure it's all correct and** SAVE **it for future use (a wise move for all of the longer listings). When everything is all hunky dory** RUN **the program and follow the on-screen instructions.**

```
10 POKE 53280,5:POKE 53281,5
20 PRINT CHR$(153) CHR$(147)
50 FOR I=49152 TO 49263
60 READ X:POKE I,X:T=T+X:NEXT
70 IF T<>14032 THEN PRINT "ERROR IN
DATA":END
80 PRINT CHR$(147):PRINT "OK – SAVE LISTING
FOR FUTURE USE":PRINT
90 PRINT "TYPE SYS 49152 TO START":END
100 DATA 169, 0, 133, 90, 133, 88, 169
110 DATA 160, 133, 91, 133, 89, 160, 0
120 DATA 177, 88, 145, 90, 136, 208, 249
130 DATA 230, 91, 230, 89, 165, 89, 201
140 DATA 0, 208, 237, 120, 169, 53, 133
150 DATA 1, 169, 96, 141, 225, 255, 88
160 DATA 169, 1, 170, 168, 32, 186, 255
170 DATA 169, 0, 32, 189, 255, 32, 213
180 DATA 255, 169, 70, 141, 189, 2, 169
190 DATA 192, 141, 190, 2, 76, 0, 4, 162
200 DATA 17, 189, 94, 192, 157, 80, 2, 202
210 DATA 16, 247, 169, 80, 141, 120, 11
220 DATA 169, 2, 141, 121, 11, 76, 32, 11
230 DATA 169, 165, 141, 255, 91, 169, 128
240 DATA 162, 0, 157, 24, 212, 202, 208
250 DATA 250, 76, 15, 64
```

MAD NURSE (Firebird)

Did you buy this? Funny isn't it . . . for at least two minutes. By the way, here's useless fact number 10,045: Did you know this was programmed by the author of *Nemesis*? Anyway, I digress – here are two rather pointless POKEs which can be inserted by loading the program and resetting the 64.

POKE 5966,234
POKE 5967,234

For infinite babies, and . . .

POKE 5595,234
POKE 5596,234
POKE 5597,234

. . . for unlimited nurses. Once you've made your changes you can restart the program by typing SYS 37539 (RETURN). These POKEs came all the way from 6500 Kristiansund, Norway and were sent by Bent Dalager.

PARADROID (Hewson)

If you've already got a copy of this classic and don't feel like shelling out lots of cash for the extra speed version, don't worry. Here's a home-made extra speed version, sent in by Jim Blackler of Lancaster especially for your delectation. To begin, type:

SYS 62806:POKE 960,0:POKE 962,246:POKE 963,19 (RETURN)

Now 'press play on tape' to load the program as normal and play it with extra speed. Rather good eh?

GUNSHIP (Microprose)

Here is a small tip to cut down the loading time on the cassette version of this fabulous combat simulator by about five minutes. When the title screen appears note the tape counter number – it should be around 52. Now when the debriefing is over and you are prompted to turn over the tape, you can fast-forward to the counter number you noted down and press play to load the program – the computer doesn't load any data before this point. Thanks very much to Jason Birnie of Cranleigh, Surrey for that time-saving tip.

BOMBJACK (Elite)

I think this POKE's pretty funny. It doesn't give unlimited lives or anything like that, but puts another 20 stone on the hapless bomb-disposing superhero *and* the marauding meanies. Load the program, reset the computer and enter . . .

POKE 3382,96 (RETURN)
POKE 53271,255:POKE 53277,255 (RETURN)

When you've done that SYS 2096 (RETURN) to restart the program with the fattest Jack ever seen. Thanks to J G homer of Long Eaton, Notts for giving us a really good laugh.

CHUCKIE EGG II (A 'N' F)

Following a plea from a reader, here is a handy 'n' dandy get-rid-of-all-the-horrible-sprites POKE from Carl Sherlock of Basingstoke, Hants. By the way, even through the dog sprite doesn't appear at the beginning of the game, you still have to drop the bone in the correct position. Right, load the program, reset the machine and enter:

POKE 24577,1:SYS 18698 (RETURN)

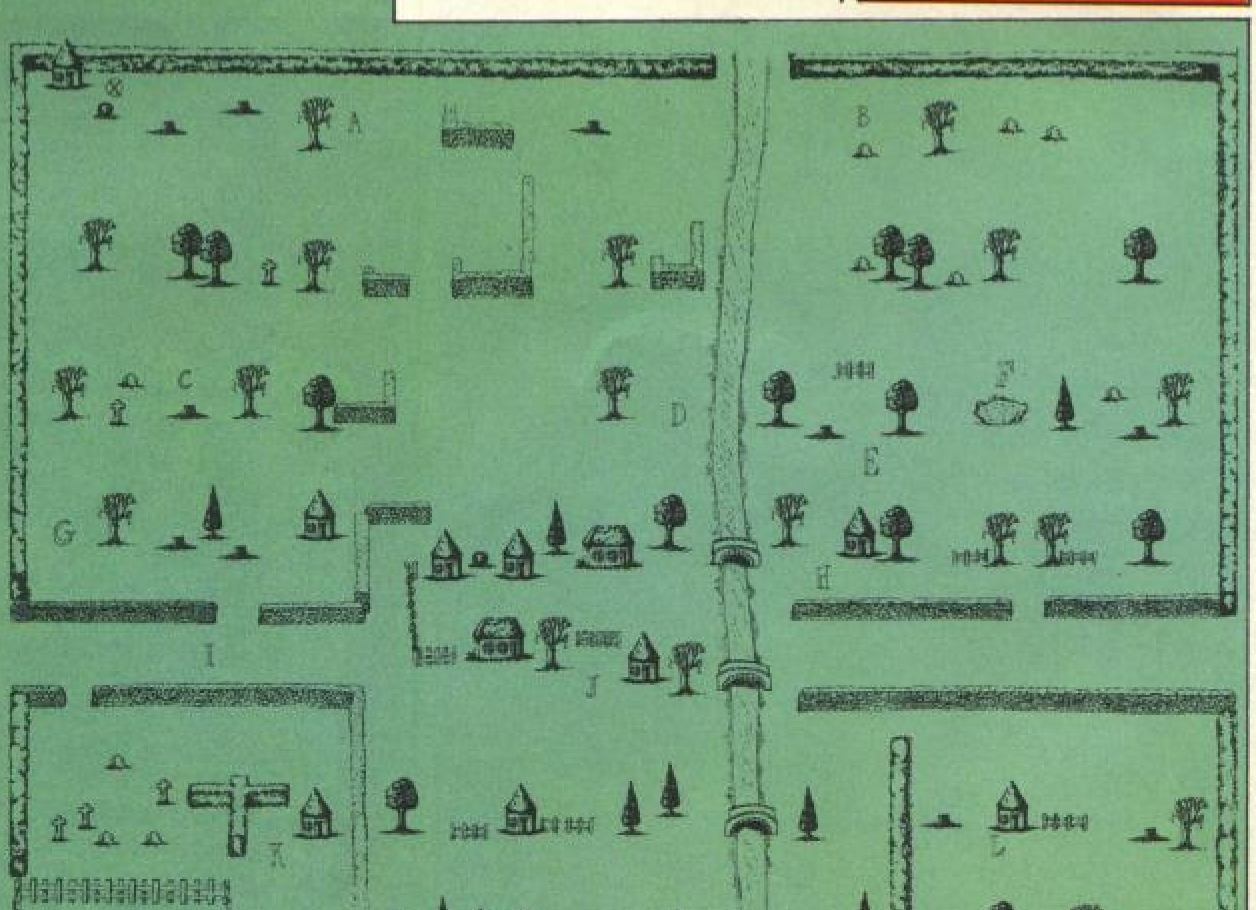
And you can play the game without having the added hassle of the hostile sprites.

FEUD THE MAP

KEY:

⊗ = START
THE MAGIC CAULDRON IS ON THE SAME SCREEN AS THE ⊗

A = MAD SAGE
B = TOADFLAX
C = BURDOCK
D = CATSEAR
E = CUD WEED
F = DEVILSBIT
G = BONES
H = PIPERWORT
I = DRAGONSTEETH
J = KNAP WEED
K = RAGWORT
L = BOG WEED
M = BIND WEED
N = DANDYLION
O = FOX GLOVE
P = CHONDRILLA
Q = SNAPDRAGON
R = FEVERFEW
S = SPEEDWELL
T = HEMLOCK
U = MOUSETAIL
V = BALM



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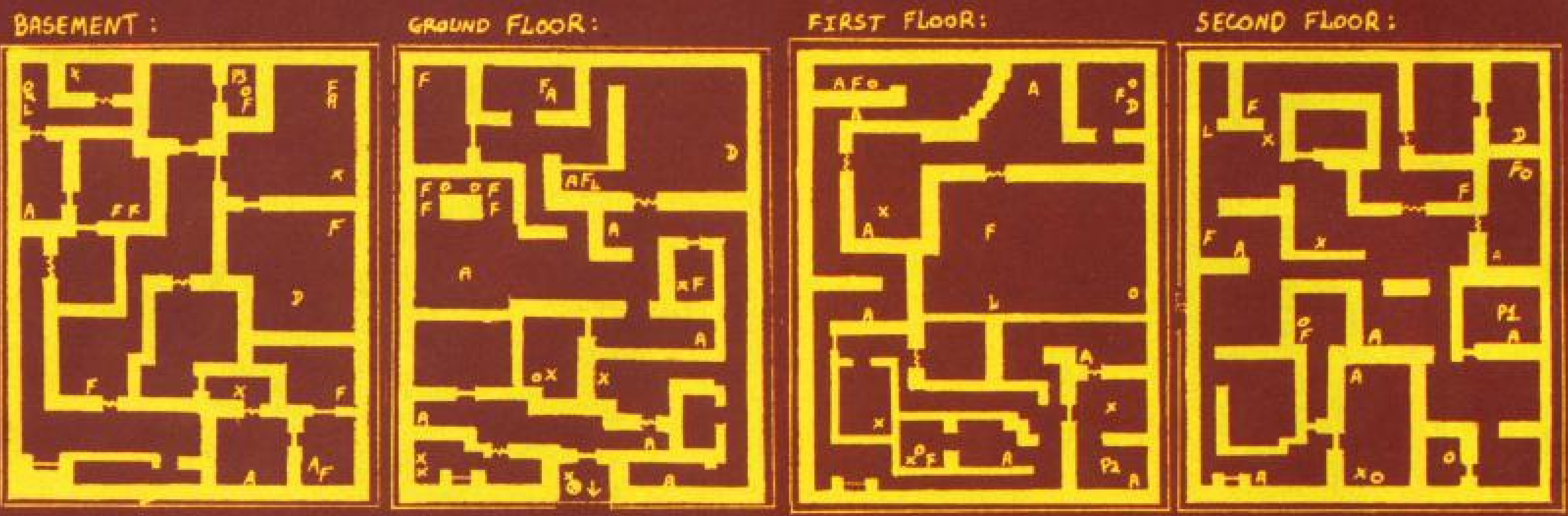
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Into the Eagle's Nest



MISSION 1: HIT ALL DETONATORS ON ALL LEVELS AND GO TO ↓
(THE DETONATORS ARE ONLY THERE IN MISSION 1)
MISSION 2: THE PRISONERS POSITION IS MARKED WITH P1
MISSION 3: THE PRISONERS POSITION IS MARKED WITH P2
MISSION 4: THE PRISONERS POSITION IS MARKED WITH P3

KEY:
⊗ = START
↓ = EXIT
▬ = LOCKED DOOR
ʌʌ = UNLOCKED DOOR
A = AMMUNITION
F = COLD FOOD
O = FIRST AID
X = DOOR KEY
L = LIFT PASS
▬ = LIFT
D = DETONATOR
P = PRISONER

LITTLE COMPUTER PEOPLE DISCOVERY KIT (Activision)

To find out your LCP's complete vocabulary simply type and RUN the following Jim Blackler listing (don't worry – there are no POKEs involved), reset the computer and load your LCP in the usual fashion. It's quite interesting to find out just what the little horrors do understand. Can anyone find some applications for some of the more obscure words?

```
10 FOR A=49721 TO 51545:B=PEEK(A)
20 IF B=33 OR B=64 OR B=128 THEN B=44
30 IF B<>44 OR C<>44 THEN ?CHR$(B);:C=B
40 NEXT
```

SKOOLDAZE (Microsphere)

Ho! Ho! Infinite *Lines*! Nice one Jim Blackler . . . If you fancy some of the same then type in and RUN the following listing, then press play on tape.

```
10 FOR A=49796 TO 49844:READ Z:POKE
A,Z:NEXT:SYS 49804
20 DATA 169, 165, 141, 101, 29, 76, 132, 255, 160,
152, 185, 107, 245, 153, 255, 191
30 DATA 185, 73, 248, 153, 56, 192, 136, 208, 241,
169, 173, 141, 189, 192, 169, 194
40 DATA 141, 190, 192, 32, 44, 247, 76, 0, 192, 169,
194, 141, 205, 3, 76, 173, 192
```

MOLECULE MAN (Mastertronic)

He's amazingly small. He can clear small neutrons in one tiny bound. He's the molecule man and is in need of unlimited everything. Well, that's what Tim and Ian Fraser of Ruislip, Middlesex think, because they've sent in this long-but-ever-so-good listing in which does just that. All you've got to do to get it operational is type it in, RUN the program and follow the on-screen instructions. It's as simple as that.

```
0 REM INFINITE EVERYTHING
1 PRINT CHR$(147)
2 FOR I=49152 TO 49191:READ X:T=T+X:POKE I,X
3 NEXT
4 FOR I=679 TO 717:READ X:T=T+X:POKE I,X
5 NEXT
6 IF T<>9014 THEN PRINT "ERROR IN DATA":END
7 PRINT "OK - SAVE LISTING FOR FUTURE USE":
PRINT
8 PRINT "TYPE SYS 49152 THEN PRESS PLAY ON
TAPE TO LOAD AND RUN MOLECULE MAN"
10 DATA 32, 24, 192, 32, 24, 192, 169
11 DATA 76, 141, 147, 44, 169, 167
12 DATA 141, 148, 44, 169, 2, 141
13 DATA 149, 44, 76, 83, 44, 169, 1
14 DATA 168, 170, 32, 186, 255, 169
15 DATA 0, 32, 189, 255, 32, 213, 255, 96
20 DATA 173, 205, 2, 201, 3, 240, 6
21 DATA 238, 205, 2, 108, 196, 0, 169
22 DATA 173, 141, 157, 16, 141, 167
23 DATA 16, 141, 70, 16, 169, 234
24 DATA 141, 139, 14, 141, 140, 14
25 DATA 141, 141, 14, 76, 146, 46, 0
```

DRAGONS LAIR (Software Projects)

Following last month's complete and utter unlimited Dirks program, comes this . . . another complete and utter unlimited Dirks program. This time though, it's for his first journey to Singe's Castle which happened in *Dragon's Lair*. It's all very simple and non-technical – all you have to do is type in the listing, RUN it and press play on tape to load the program with unlimited lives. Thanks to Tim and Ian Fraser from Ruislip, Middlesex.

```
10 I=49152
20 READ A:IF A=256 THEN 30
21 T=T+A:POKE I,A:I=I+1:GOTO 20
30 IF T=8477 THEN PRINT "OK":SYS 49152
40 PRINT "ERROR IN DATA":END
49152 DATA 169, 1, 168, 170, 32, 186, 255, 169
49160 DATA 0, 32, 189, 255, 32, 213, 255, 162
49168 DATA 25, 189, 40, 192, 157, 96, 1, 202
49176 DATA 16, 247, 162, 6, 189, 66, 192, 157
49184 DATA 156, 8, 202, 16, 247, 76, 32, 8
49192 DATA 120, 162, 2, 189, 119, 1, 157, 245
49200 DATA 69, 202, 16, 247, 76, 1, 68, 169
49208 DATA 165, 141, 229, 15, 76, 0, 12, 76
49216 DATA 111, 1, 165, 10, 240, 250, 76, 96
49224 DATA 1, 256
```

THE SENTINEL (Firebird)

According to Firebird's resident bespectacled scruffy youth Colin 'Oh really' Fuige, the object of *The Sentinel* is to battle through all 9,999 screens and get the code to screen 0000 – where the mission begins.

A hefty task indeed, but if you don't fancy all that hassle and heartache simply play he first screen as normal, absorb the Sentinel on the first screen, get rid of nearly all your energy by creating robots, boulders or trees and hyperspace from the plinth with three units of energy (a robot) – the code to screen 0000 is displayed in all its glory! Therefore, in the gospel according to Firebird, you've won.

Quite a few of you have managed to battle through all 10,000 screens the hard way and consequently think you're hot stuff, *but* (and that would have been a big but if space had allowed) you're not a complete master of *The Sentinel* unless you manage to complete . . .

GEOFF CRAMMOND'S ULTIMATE CHALLENGE

Which is to get a Meanie to appear on the Sentinel's plinth. That's the ultimate aim for *The Sentinel* conquerers, as laid down by the author. Try it – it's easy in theory, but very, very difficult in practice.

NEMESIS (Konami)

An unlimited lives POKE may seem a bit pointless after the previously mentioned easy-to-find disable sprite collision, but at least it gives the player a challenge – the floating-oh-so-free mode makes the game far, far too easy and boredom soon sets in. Load the program as normal and when the speech starts stop the cassette recorder and press RUN/STOP. At this point you can SYS 32600 to hear the speech again and POKE 32628 (0-255) (the default being 13) to speed up and slow it down. When you get bored type in the following listing:

```
10 FOR A=49152 TO 49165:READ Z:POKE
A,Z:NEXT:SYS49152
20 DATA 32, 86, 245, 169, 165, 141, 179, 3, 169, 174,
141, 182, 3, 96
```

And RUN it. When the computer resets type . . .

POKE 7230,224
For unlimited lives

POKE 3803,233:POKE 3804,10
If you wish to use the 'P' key to select weapons

SYS 2075 to restart the program. Thanks very much to James Blackler of Lancaster for that.

NOSFERATU THE VAMPYRE (Piranha)

Here are seven useful tips from Dave Eastwood of Leeds to help you through the first section of this creepy forced-perspective computer thriller.

The boots found in one of the fireplaces near the start are very useful and protect you from attacks by the horrible marauding spiders. Take the sword from the dining-room wall and use it to kill the bats – just press the fire button or space bar when a bat comes close to take a swipe at the evil creature. A two-tone beep signifies a successful hit. Another good thing about carrying the sword is that bats take less energy when they attack, and dogs don't hurt in the slightest. If your energy situation is looking a bit on the grim side, remember that food is hidden in some of the gravestones and fireplaces in the cellar and can be eaten to replenish lost energy.

The Deeds to the house are found down in the cellar directly opposite the entrance to the crypt. A big points bonus is earned for these if you are carrying them when you make an escape. The best way to get to the cellar is by going via the library, and returning via the kitchen. When you finally have the Deeds take them to the front door, collect the key and use it on the door (this is the quickest method of escape).

EQUALIZER (The Power House)

Eeek! It's that green, nappied spriticidal maniac who's doing some hefty evolving. He's well-hard, but if you're having trouble combating what mother nature can throw at you load the program, reset the computer and enter any of the following:

POKE 26098,234:POKE 26099,234
For unlimited lives

POKE 19101,(0-15)
To change the Equalizer's skin colour

POKE 19096,(0-15)
To change the Equalizer's hair colour

And if you want to get rid of all the horrible ground creatures type . . .

FOR N=25661 TO 25669:POKE N,234:NEXT (RETURN)

And if that still doesn't make the game easy enough try this one out . . .

POKE 48865,(0-16)
To start on the relevant level

When you're happy with the changes you've made SYS 24912 **to restart, and off you go. The man responsible for that series is** Mark Eckford **who lives in Galashiels, Scotland. By the way, if you don't want to bother entering the POKEs, simply press the C key and tap** RESTORE **during play to skip from one screen to the next.**

SHOCKWAY RIDER (FTL)

If your skillful soft-shoe shuffling of the walkways is more like oafish hob-nail clumping of the Liddon, perhaps you'd like to try this remedy from Zoltan Kelemen, a resident of Ranunkelgrand 48, Tyreso, Sweden. Simply type in the following listing, RUN it and press play on tape to load the program with unlimited riders.

```
10 FOR I=49393 TO 49434:READ A:POKE
I,A:C=C+A:NEXT I:IF C=5646 THEN SYS 49393
20 PRINT "ERROR IN DATA"
30 DATA 198, 157, 169, 0, 162, 1, 168, 32, 186, 255,
32, 189, 255, 32, 213, 255, 230, 157, 240, 238
40 DATA 169, 193, 141, 103, 207, 76, 71, 206, 169,
173, 141, 160, 26, 78, 140, 19, 206, 75, 27, 76
50 DATA 13, 8
```

And so the proverbial curtain falls on yet another tips section. If all goes well and the world doesn't blow up, next month should bring some really brilliant POKEs from Tim and Ian Fraser and Jim Blackler, as well as another fab 3D map (that's if the 3D map competition entries are any good). In the meantime, if you have anything in the way of hints, tips, maps, solutions, part solutions, POKEs and so on – you should have the idea by now – send them in to me at ZZAP! TIPS, ZZAP! Towers, PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1DB Look forward to hearing from you . . .

WIN! THIS ORIGINAL PIECE OF BRYAN TALBOT ARTWORK!

NEMESIS THE WARLOCK T-SHIRTS AND BOOKS UP FOR GRABS!

ZZAP! COMP

PLUS!

COPIES OF MARTECH'S NEW GAME!

MARTECH have joined forces with the cult comic 2000 AD to produce a new platform hack 'em up, *Nemesis The Warlock* (see review on page 15).

Nemesis the Warlock exists far in the future when the invention of interstellar space travel and the whole era before has become no more than a half-hour long history lesson. One thing that is not taught in history lessons, however, is Man's first encounter with an Alien race – Torquemada, the Grand Master of Earth (or Termight as it is now known) has seen to that.

Torquemada is not really a nice bloke – his lifelong ambition has been to purge the Universe of all Alien inhabitants. Now it looks as though he may well be able to do this with his huge army of Terminators. There is hope though – an alien force strong enough to defeat Torquemada exists, in the form of Nemesis The Warlock and the ABC Warriors – shown here giving a few Terminators what for.

Martech are offering this original piece of Bryan Talbot artwork from the 2000 AD strip (actual size 375 x 315mm) to the winner of this competition. They're also throwing in several runner-up prizes, including the complete set of five **Nemesis The Warlock** books, five T-shirts and 25 copies of the game.

As you've all been pure, vigilant and behaving, and as none of you are aliens (as far as we know anyway), we've decided to make this competition nice and straightforward. As you can see, six sections have been taken from the artwork and placed beside it. All you have to do is say where you think the six sections should go, using the system of letters and numbers beside the artwork – easy eh?

Entries should be in by June 11th, with the first correct entry pulled out of Glenys Powell's Girlie Handbag receiving the artist's original artwork, a Nemesis T-shirt and a copy of the game. The second entry drawn earns the sender five Titan Nemesis books, a T-shirt and a copy of the game. The next five receive a T-shirt, book five in the Nemesis series and a copy of the game, AND another 25 lucky winners receive a copy of the game!


1

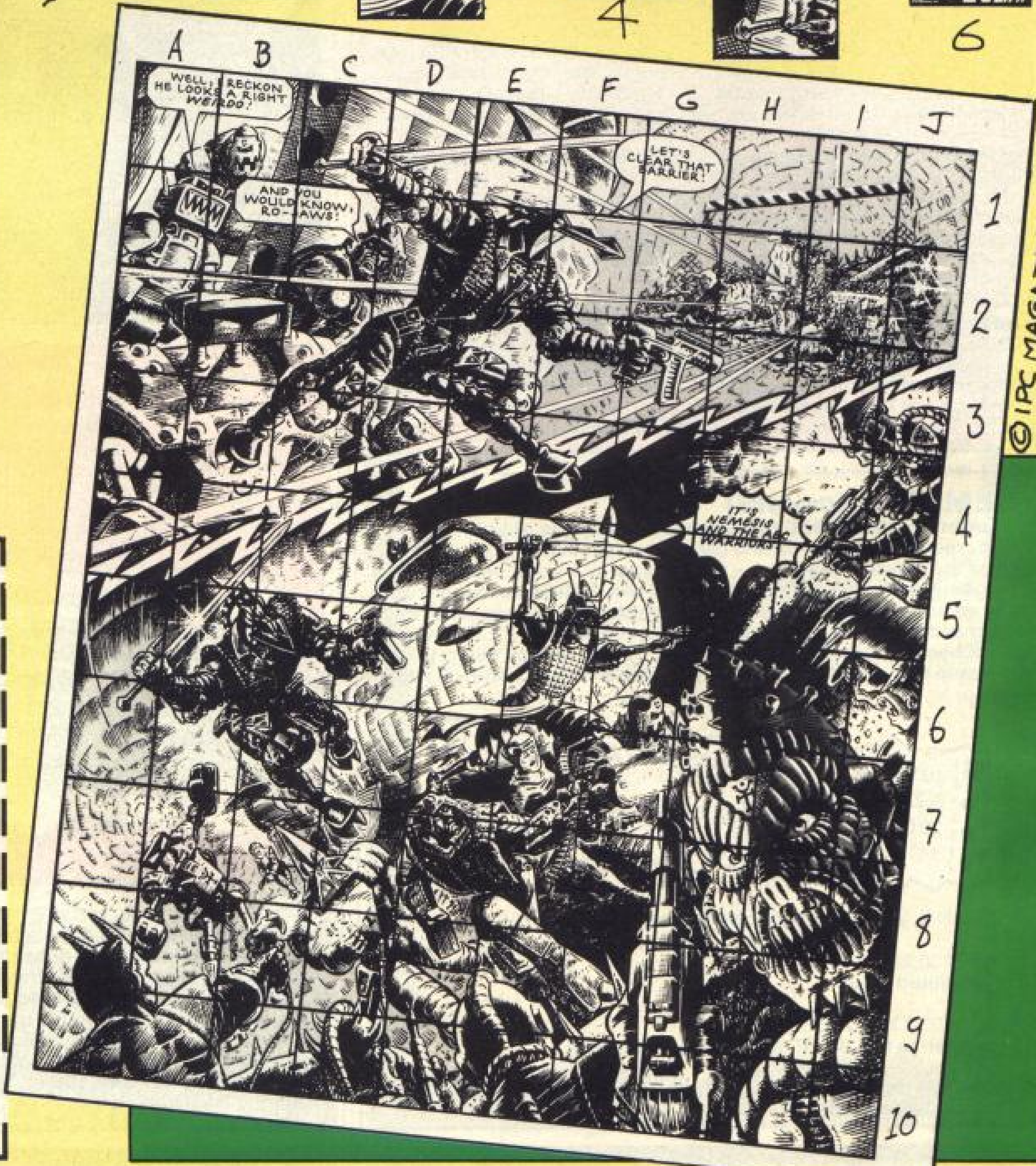

2


3


4


5


6



NAME ____________

ADDRESS ____________

____

____

____

POSTCODE ____________

I think the six pieces come from . . .

1. ____________
2. ____________
3. ____________
4. ____________
5. ____________
6. ____________

GRIBBLY'S SPECIAL DAY OUT
Hewson

Two levels from Andrew Braybrook's smoother, slightly enhanced version of *Gribbly's Day Out* – Level Zero (Hide The Gribblets In The Cave), and Level Twelve (Concerto For Island And Tree).

It's a little bit faster, with a tweaked control method and scoring system, enhanced spot FX, improved graphics ("for a more rural effect", says Andrew), and the character set is a little chunkier – for the benefit of the minority who couldn't read the original. Oh, and the screen glitch has been removed (apparently it caused a 64 to overheat!).

Set on planet Blabgor, you control Gribbly Grobbly – a typical Blabgorian: green, with one-foot, no arms and a large head. But what the Blabgorians lack in appendages, they make up for admirably with psychic energy, which enables them to levitate and carry objects . . . such ' infantile Gribblets, which enjoy nothing better than defying their parents and bouncing around the landscapes of Blabgor.

The objective is to rescue as many of the eight baby Gribblets on each screen as possible. Gribbly has two modes of control: Bounce and Flight. When in flight, colliding with scenery (trees, bushes, rock and especially water) depletes his Psi-Energy (shown at the bottom of the screen). Gribbly loses a life when this level reaches zero, and dies when his Psi-Bank quota runs out. In bounce mode however, the scenery presents no threat. Lost energy is restored by picking up the pulsating Psi-Pods which litter the landscape. Hostiles can be despatched by 'bubbling' them – pressing the fire button release a stream of bubbles from Gribbly's mouth.

Seed Pods (resembling sycamore 'helicopter' seeds) flitter aimlessly around the screen, until they hit the ground – whereupon they turn into Topsies – green, bendy creatures patrolling back an forth in search of Gribblets. When a Topsie finds a Gribblet, it flips the unfortunate creature onto its back, exposing its brain to the intense heat of the sun. The Topsie then turns into a chrysalis, where it mutates into a Stomper. True to its name, the Stomper stomps around the playing area in search of Gribblets to kidnap. On finding a Gribblet, the Stomper sprouts wings and mutates into a Flapper, then flies around the screen with its hostage. Bonus points are earned for shooting a Flapper and



catching thé falling Gribblet (listen for its scream!) before it reaches the ground. Note: the Gribblet dies if it hits a landscape feature, so take care when bubbling Flappers.

Also, beware of Seon the mutant Blabgorian, a deranged crab-like bank clerk who absorbed evil Psi-Thoughts when working at a Psi-Bank. Bubbling Seon merely stops him in his tracks, so don't stray too near . . .

A web network spans each screen, draining Gribbly's energy on contact. Sections of the web are turned off and on by pressing the fire button when over a pulsating switch. When only one gribblet remains to be collected, the web automatically turns itself off, freeing Seon in the process – so watch out!

If you manage to get to and complete the second level of this demo (Level Twelve), you are put back on Level Twelve, only things get a little trickier . . . For full tips by Gribbly himself (translation courtesy of Andrew Braybrook) on how to play this excellent game, see ZZAP! Issue Eight. Expect to see the full 16 level version towards the end of the year on an Andrew Braybrook compilation, including (amongst other things) *Heavy Metal Paradroid* . . .



THE DAY THE UNIVERSE DIED
Sensible Software

Cuddly Krix Yates and Jovial Jops Hare (with help from Nifta Yates – as seen in *Wizball*) prove their worth with this fun-filled three dimensional graphics demonstration. A demonstration of things to come . . . a game. A game of plundering, piracy and POWER. A game overflowing with blasting and strategy . . .

The whole universe has been destroyed and all that remains are the trading ships and starbases which were travelling through a black hole when the universe died. Your objective is to take control of all the starbases, assemble them into a perfect sphere in space and concentrate their firepower directly into the middle of sphere . . . to create a natural star – a sun. The beginning of a new world. A new life, and new civilisations. A new UNIVERSE!

Ships have to be destroyed or preferably disabled and transformed into your own fleet. Troops should to be allocated effectively, so strategy is required when assigning men to positions in the ship where their specific skills will be appreciated.

As yet, Sensible Software don't have publisher in mind, but are open to offers . . .

They don't have a name for this game either – so, they have devised a simple COMPETITION! All you have to do is think up a suitable name, based on the information contained within this preview. The person who supplies the best title will have his or her name used as the hero (or heroine) in the scenario, and 30 runners-up names will be used as the names of starbases that appear in the game! Send your entry to **I'VE GOT A SENSIBLE NAME, ZZAP! Towers, PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1DB**, to arrive here before the 10th of June.

MADE IN FRANCE II

A one or two player variation on the bat and ball theme, intended to be the pause mode for *Revenge II*, but omitted due to a lack of memory (no, Jeff didn't forget!). Press 'A' to toggle between the computer and human controlled second player. Joystick Port Two for the top player, Port One (or CTRL and 2 for left and right respectively) for the bottom player. The first person to allow the ball to leave the screen has lost, and the winner gains an icon.

NB: there is a small bug in the two player mode, where the computer suddenly decides to take control of the player at the bottom of the screen. Oh, and don't worry about the jerky computer controlled player – that's just Jeff's way of making sure it doesn't become too predictable, and too formidable an opponent!





A LITTLE EXTRA

Mix-E-Load, courtesy of Rob Hubbard (music), Gary Liddon (coding, character set, and scrolling message), Bob Stevenson (graphics), and . . . well, Thalamus. The *Delta* loader, stolen (with permission) from Stavros Fasoulas' latest blast. Mix and match to your heart's content – poke a 'stick in the rear hole (Port Two) and alter the lead voice, bass line, drums and overall effect. Mmmmm. Press the fire button and move the the 'stick up or down for gallons of pitch bend.



THE LAST NINJA
System 3

Not so much a playable demo as a walk in the park. Some screens from one of the six independently loaded sections – to be more precise, it's a view from inside the Palace with music by Anthony Lees.

System 3 reckon the finished product will feature approximately 1,500 sprites (chosen from over 3,500 images), 130 screens (chosen from over 400) spread across ▶

REVENGE OF THE MUTANT CAMELS II
Llamasoft

Take it away, Jeff . . .

"This is a demo of *Revenge Of The Mutant Camels II*, my forthcoming blaster. For the sake of example, it's a single wave of gameplay. To enter the demo wave, plug a joystick into Port Two and press the fire button when you're in the Wave Select Grid; the wave will begin, and your camel appears and falls to the ground. At this point you can move the camel with the joystick and hold down the fire button to aim a stream of bullets at the opposing nasties. If you jump and either hold the joystick in the up position or hold down fire, the camel flies. While flying, the camel drops bombs (useful in particular attack waves). To land, just release the fire button.

"The demo gives a single attack wave, but randomises the backgrounds each time you play the wave, so you can see some of the groovy scenery featured in the finished version.

"Losing a life or completing the demo wave returns you to the select grid. In the full version, this is where you can buy extra weapons (like big bullets, smart bullets, extra shield and that sort of kit); and choose which of the 100 waves to play next. Simply move the round cursor over the square of your chosen wave and press fire. The only limitation is that you may only enter waves adjacent to an already-completed wave – thus, as you play the game you can make your own path through the levels, avoiding heavy waves until you get enough bread to buy some heavy firepower and sort 'em out.

"Your objective is simple . . . to complete the entire 100 levels with minimum loss of life. You start with five lives, losing one each time your shield-energy is reduced to zero. If you get 40 creds a new life can be bought. Should you complete all 100 waves (fat chance) you get a bonus based on lives remaining at time of completion."



six loads, 12 soundtracks – six Anthony Lees intermission tracks while the sections load, and six main themes written by Ben Daglish.

Loads One and Two involve travelling through the Wilderness, Load Three is a trek through the Palace Gardens, Load Four is the Dungeon, Load Five is the Ground Floor of the Palace and Load Six is the First Floor.

Each level is a mini-maze, and needs to be mapped – so pencil and paper are essential. There are many puzzles to solve (finding specific objects accesses the next load) and dozens of opponents to beat up – using either your staff, sword, nunchukas, fists or feet.

Expect to see the finished game in the shops soon, and a full review next issue.

ROB HUBBARD'S AURAL DELIGHTS

"To all my fans, love Rob"



Thalamusic – an audio remix of the *Sanxion* loading tune. Approximately five minutes and forty-two seconds in length. Rob used authentic Fairlight samples, as heard on Jean Michel Jarre's Zoolook. The piece was performed on a Yamaha CX5M, linked up to an Akai S900 Sampler with a Digital Reverb and a Yamaha RX15 Drum Machine, and recorded on a four-track.

Rob recently finished writing the music for Martech's *Nemesis The Warlock*, and is currently composing for Melbourne House's *Wiz* – a piece which will push the SID chip to previously unheard of limits (again). He wants to travel the world, help the sick and elderly ("we owe them a lot"), and write for the ST ("I've always been a great fan") . . .

SIDE A

Gribbly's Special Day Out
Hewson

The Day The Universe Died
Sensible Software

Made In France II
Llamasoft

Revenge II
Llamasoft

Mix-E-Load
Thalamus

The Last Ninja
System 3

SIDE B

Thalamusic
Rob Hubbard

FILE NAME	COUNTER
GRIBBLY'S	
SENSIBLE 3D	
MIF II	
REVENGE II DEMO	
DELTA MIXELOAD	
TLN	

Use the table provided to note the tape counter position of each demo

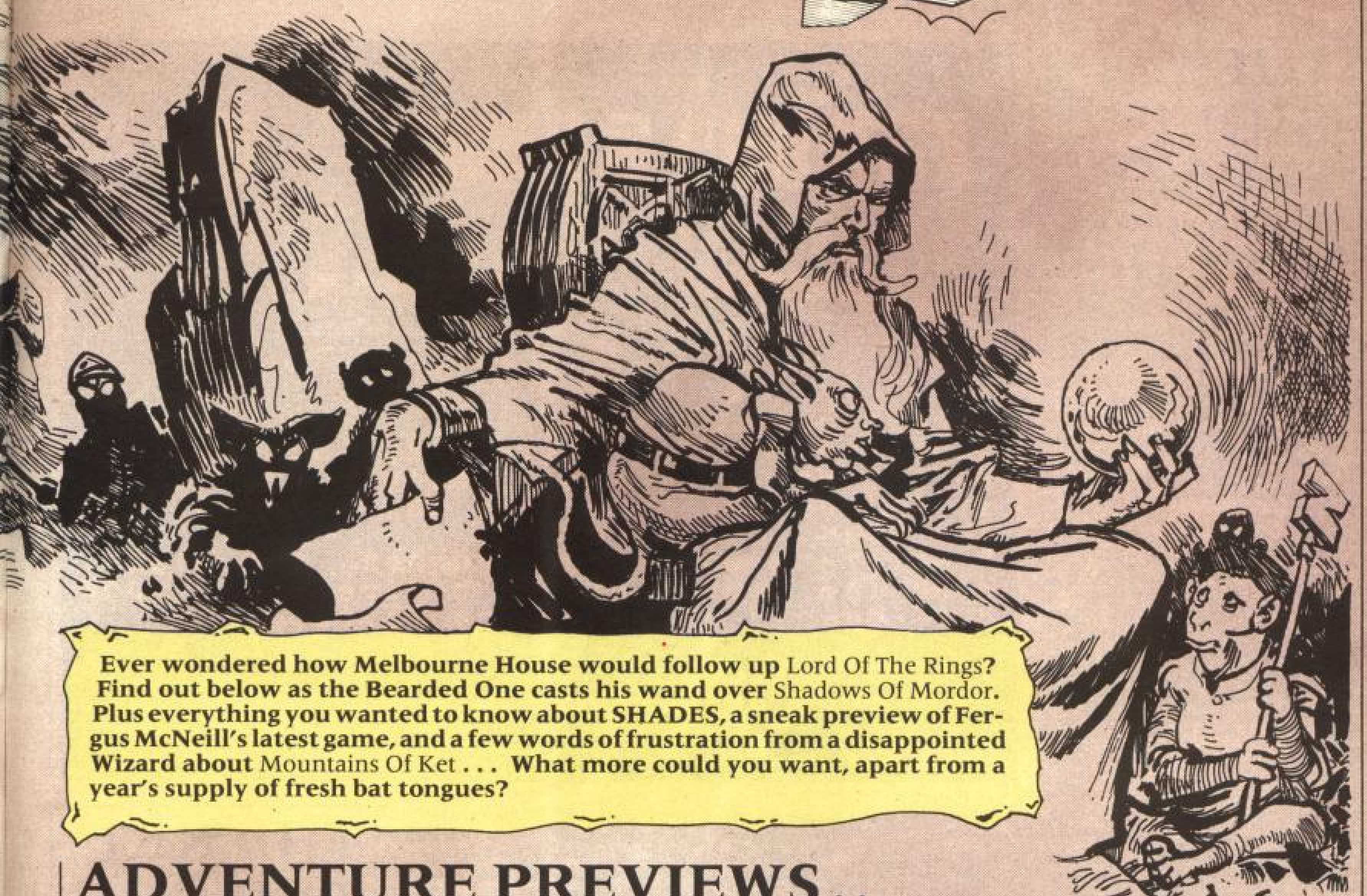


It seems a little harsh that the C64 versions of this game should be £2.00 more expensive than their Spectrum counterparts (and £1.00 more than the Amstrad) but the Wiz has to reserve judgement at this stage because he hasn't actually SEEN the 64 version. However, I understand it will have improved graphics (in quality and quantity), so perhaps that will make up for the loss of spondoolies.

Meanwhile, the Bearded One has dallied awhile with another eight bit version – a pre-production copy running on an Amstrad – and couldn't resist spilling the beans for the benefit of those of us sensible enough to have bought a . . . well . . . better computer!

As we all know (but I'll tell you anyway) the original Tolkien masterpiece *Lord Of The Rings* comprised three books – *The Fellowship Of The Ring, The Two Towers,* and *The Return Of The King*. Melbourne House's first program – *Lord Of The Rings* – covers the essential storyline contained in Book One and this latest effort, *Shadows Of Mordor*, sticks fairly closely to the plot of Book Two.

That means in essence that you must stay out of the way of the Black Riders (as always), and carry the ring to the borders of Mordor in the company of your faithful companion Sam Gamgee. To begin, you and Sam have been separated from your companions (as in the original book) and must continue alone. Help comes from



Ever wondered how Melbourne House would follow up Lord Of The Rings? **Find out below as the Bearded One casts his wand over** Shadows Of Mordor. **Plus everything you wanted to know about SHADES, a sneak preview of Fergus McNeill's latest game, and a few words of frustration from a disappointed Wizard about** Mountains Of Ket . . . **What more could you want, apart from a year's supply of fresh bat tongues?**

ADVENTURE PREVIEWS . .

SHADOWS OF MORDOR

Melbourne House, £9.95 cassette, £14.95 disk

unlikely quarters, including the odious Smeagol (otherwise known as Gollum) who has already put in an appearance in the first Melbourne House game *The Hobbit*.

So – forget the blurb – what's the game like? *Lord Of The Rings* was, after all, rather a disappointment for most of us. The response times were dreadfully slow, the bugs most uncommonly large, and . . . well, that's enough to put most people off. *Shadows*, however, appears to be a rather more polished affair.

The game 'shell' seems to be remarkably similar to *LOR*. The screen format is pretty well identical and the input syntax is the same. You start the adventure by choosing whether you wish to control Sam or Frodo or both during play. Once in the game you can't change your mind, so it's best to choose both – even if you think you may only wish to control one. If you hit RETURN at this stage, the game defaults to Frodo-control only.

The programmers say that if you choose to play both characters then the computer will 'animate' whichever hobbit you're not controlling. If you only choose one, then the other hobbit will be 'more fully animated'. I tried both options but it wasn't immediately clear how much difference this 'more-full-animation' actually made.

During play you enter your inputs in a small scrolling window at the bottom of the screen. On the version I saw you could only see three lines of input, which means that old inputs get rapidly scrolled out of sight. I find this rather annoying – especially in mazes and the like where it helps to see what you entered, say, four moves ago.

As in most adventures nowadays, the good ol' interactive character raises his head in *Shadows*. It's hardly surprising, as this is a technique that Melbourne House pioneered with *The Hobbit*. What is surprising is how little the technique has developed. Every so often the input cursor disappears while the program manipulates the various 'mobiles' – a rather better technique than constant time-slicing, reckons the Wiz, because at least you know, when the cursor is absent, that the program is busy and won't be able to respond to your inputs.

I don't know for sure, but I suspect that one of the reasons *Lord Of The Rings* was so slow in operation is that there were too many characters to handle effectively without compromising on response times. *Shadows* has fewer major characters (effectively only three – Frodo, Sam, and Smeagol) and that could be one reason why the response times are so much better.

Playing *Shadows* is certainly a far more pleasurable experience than playing *LOR*. On the other hand, one has the feeling that the actual substance of the game is slightly more limited. Having only two characters to control may be the reason for this.

As with *Lord Of The Rings*, Melbourne House make a great play out of there being 800 words in the vocabulary. The Wiz tends to dismiss these claims as being unimportant – there are some excellent home-brew adventures written using *GAC* which amply demonstrate that there is little connection between size of vocabulary and quality of game. *Shadows* does, however, allow some reasonably complex inputs, such as DROP THE SHORT AND THE LONG SWORDS or KILL ALL BUT FRODO.

You can also communicate with those you meet, but as usual the conversations tend to be rather stilted, and frequently you will receive quite incongruous replies. Nevertheless the feature seems to be better implemented here than it is in most cassette-based games.

The Wiz quite enjoyed playing *Shadows*, but the fact is that it's not a game of stunning innovation. I think that part of the trouble is that the adventure market is polarising to a greater extent between more expensive disk-based games with huge amounts of data and complex character interactions, and budget software like *Aztec Gold* and *SubSunk*.

By releasing *Shadows* at £9.95 Melbourne have, I think, taken the right decision. After all, that's only £2.00 more expensive than the *Gold Medallion GAC* home-brew series from Incentive – and there's certainly a lot more meaty programming here. A year or so ago the going rate for a Melbourne House Tolkien game was about fifteen quid, so prices have dropped as quality has improved. A final judgement must await the release of the finished C64 version, but despite some reservations about the size of the game and hence its lasting interest, I reckon that it deserves to sell rather better than some of Melbourne House's recent disappointments.

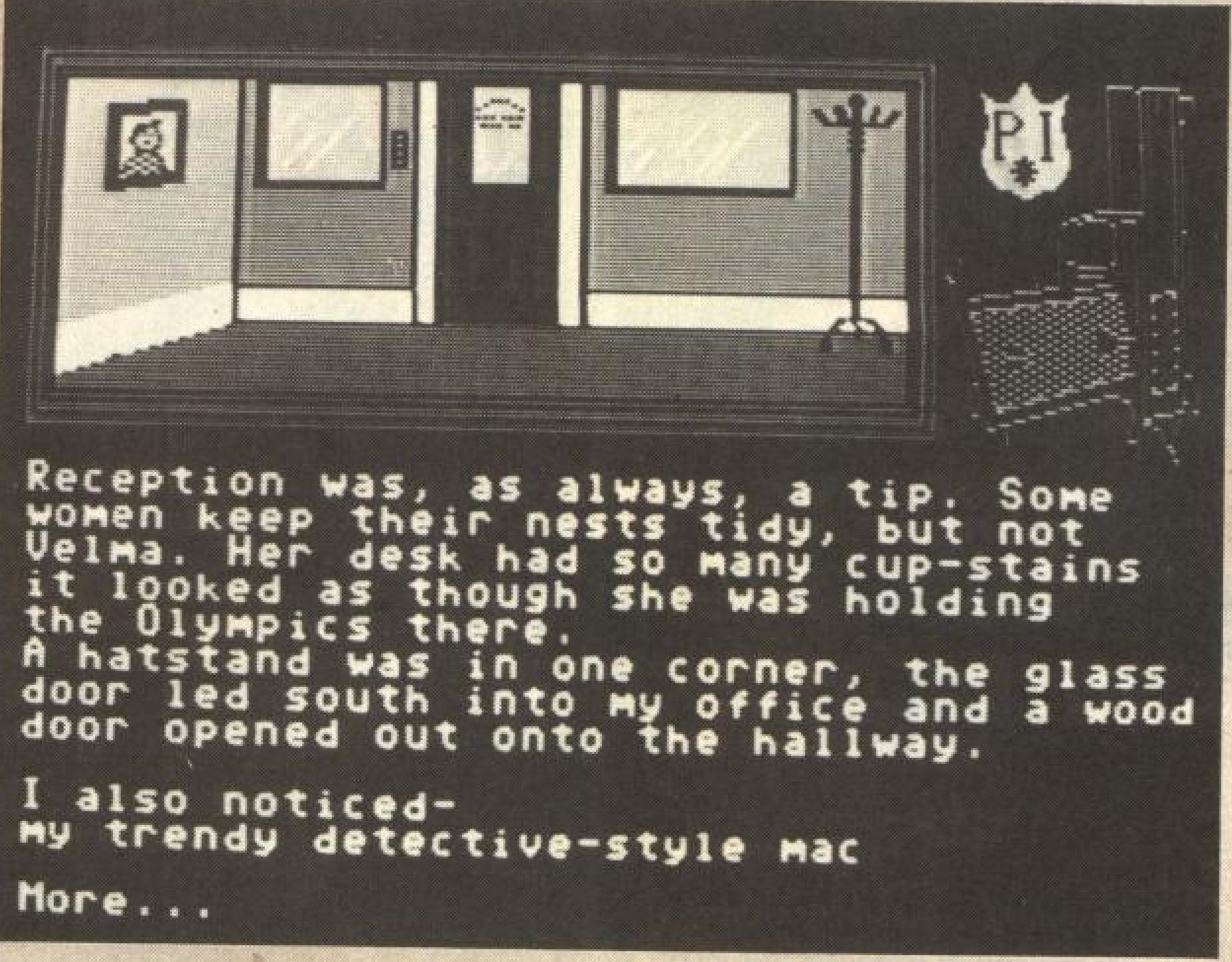
THE BIG SLEAZE

Piranha, £9.95 cassette only

Yet another incomplete game lands on the Wiz's doorstep, this time from those Piranha people, who seem to have struck up a very close friendship with Fergus 'The Boggit' McNeill.

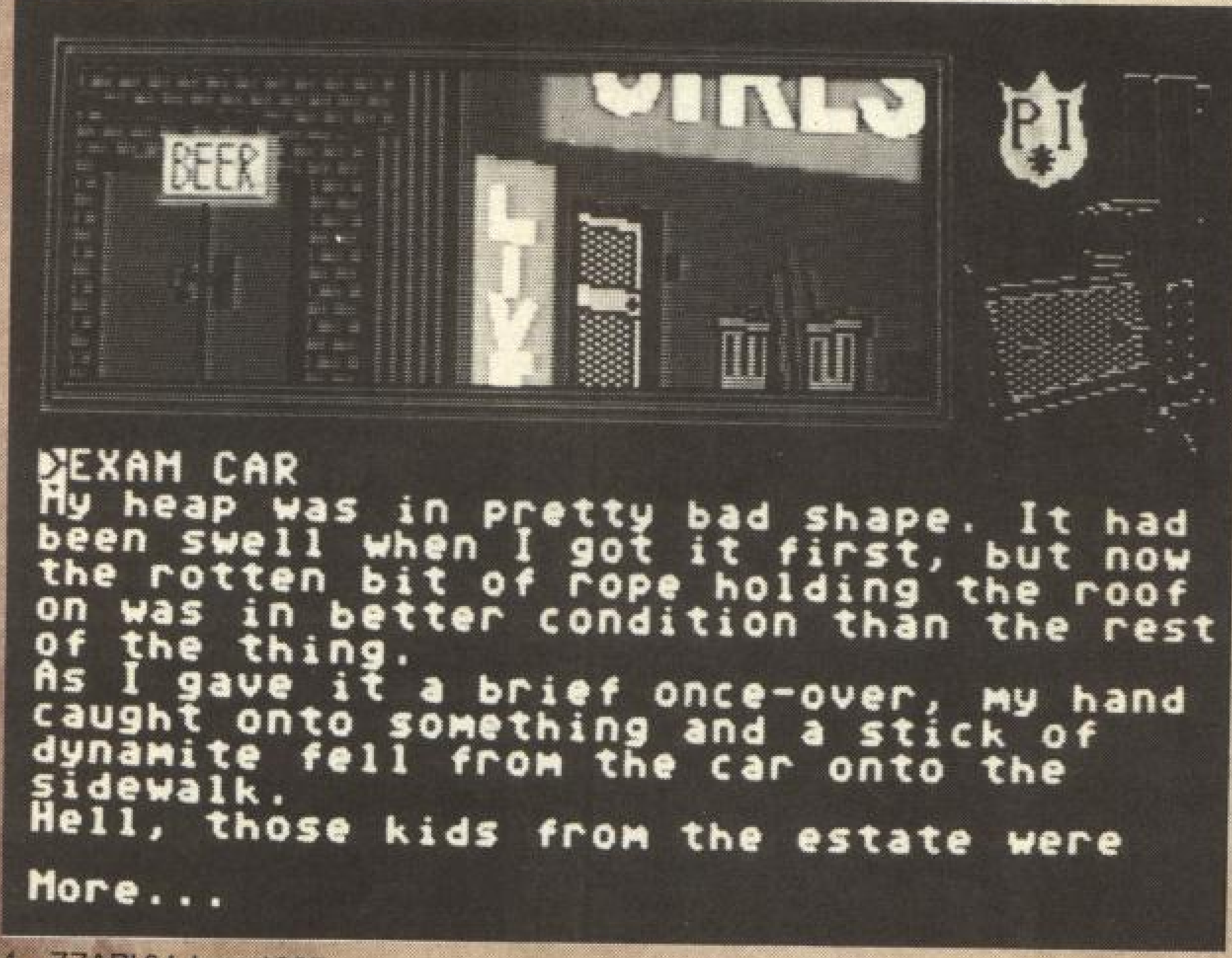
By now just about everybody who plays adventures must have heard of Fergus McNeill, founding father (I believe) of Delta 4 software who made their name with a whole string of Quillustrated, irreverent spoofs. From *Bored Of The Rings* onwards, Delta 4 seem to have taken a tilt at most available targets, with varying success.

Despite the enjoyment the Wiz got out of some of their earlier games, I think they may be on to a rather tougher assignment with *The Big Sleaze* than hitherto. First, any take-off of Mickey Spillane/Damon Runyon-type gangsterism has to compete with other games on the same theme (*Bugsy* and *Borrowed Time* to name just two). Second, unlike some of Delta 4's earlier targets, in the case of American crime fiction the originals are just so damn good!



Perhaps it was because of my respect for pulpy American fiction that I didn't find the humour in *The Big Sleaze* nearly as refreshing as other Delta 4 releases – on the other hand I did find the detail of the game well thought-out and vividly written. As Sam Spillade, private eye, you must wade your way through a number of cases that come and go throughout a three-part loader (typical Delta 4 format) ingeniously put together with the Quillustrator ensemble.

The graphics are great and the vocabulary has been very well thought out – in fact I'd go so far as to say that what's here is the best of Delta 4's programming efforts to date. It's just that after *Bugsy* and *Borrowed Time*, the Wiz is getting a bit tired of being a private eye.



THE KET TRILOGY

Incentive Software

This is something of an old chestnut – the Wiz can remember reviewing these games back in the days of Personal Computer Games magazine . . . they weren't bad in 1984!

How they've stood the test of time, however, remains to be seen, since the Wiz's copy failed to load – as did two other copies in the ZZAP! office. If Incentive get us another copy by next month, the Wiz will tell all . . .



Staying in the SHADES! . . .



IN HIS pursuit of the Ultimate MUG (Multi-User Game), the Wand Wielder goes on-line for details of Micronet's SHADES . . .

SHADES has superficial resemblances to MUD, which the Wiz has already discussed on these pages. However, there are some very significant differences. Let's examine the record . . .

First, SHADES is run as part of the Micronet empire. Micronet itself is in turn a part of Prestel, British Telecom's teletext information service. That means that – in the final analysis – both MUD and SHADES are coming from the same supplier – good ol' big ol' rich ol' BT.

Of course there's a reason for that – MUGs cost money. We've already seen how MUD runs on a VAX mini-computer that wouldn't leave you any change out of 50 grand (second hand) – add to that all the paraphernalia you need to deal with all the incoming calls and you have a sizeable investment.

In fact, SHADES uses a rather neat hardware set-up. It runs on a machine not much larger than a photocopier – essentially a PDP11 system with a modified operating system specially designed for coping with the demands of MUGs. Such a degree of hard and software dedication argues well for the future, and Micronet already have a number of other MUGs under development (which they're not talking about).

SHADES Direct . . .

Using Micronet's teletext service – which requires a special screen configuration on your terminal and can only handle a 40 column screen – might be seen as a bit of a bore when you're involved with what is essentially a text-based game. Teletext is ideally suited to travel agent's timetable displays and ads for estate agents, but it's not so good for a text-adventure. However, users will doubtless be as pleased as I was to hear that in the very near future (probably by the time you read this) it will be possible to dial direct into SHADES using a standard ASCII terminal – much as you would dial into BT GOLD or a bulletin board.

That will almost certainly do much to increase dramatically the number of users – currently standing at about 2,000, most of whom are fairly active. To cope with the demand, SHADES runs up to seven games simultaneously and new players (up to 64 at once) are logged into whichever game has space for them. This ensures an optimum spread of players, with no game becoming too crowded.

An even more significant feature is that SHADES resets itself automatically once every hour. Players are warned about this about three minutes before timeout, giving them time to dump their treasure and maximise their current scores before moving on to the next game.

Nice 'n' Friendly . . .

The lack of crowding together with frequent resets makes SHADES rather less daunting for the novice player. That 'user-friendly' element is substantially boosted by the fact that novices are invulnerable – so until you start to climb the ladder to social success you can take most risks with impunity. What's more, the game makes it easier to amass treasure to start with. Certain valuable items (known as 'toys') are *only* obtainable by novices. If a seer, for example, tries to carry one it will wriggle out of his/her grasp.

Combine that with the fact that incoming players are presented with a riddle which not only guides them to their first treasure item but also helps them work out what to do with it and you're confronted by a game that has gone out of its way to be easy to play for inexperienced gamesters. This must be an essential tactic for any MUG wanting to attract large numbers of users and is one area where MUD can perhaps be criticised – the Land we entered a few issues back can be quite a frightening place for the newcomer.

The Price of Magik . . .

As in MUD, the aim of SHADES is to collect and steal treasure, kill mobiles and other players, and in doing so to progress from lowly Novice to wondrous Wizard. Wizards in SHADES have similar powers to their counterparts in MUD – they can do practically anything. I was intrigued to discover that in SHADES, however, Wizzes can even create new locations and objects. Just as well as there are only about ten of them at present – otherwise life could become rather confusing!

Lyn Barrett of Micronet reckons it would take you a minimum of 20 hours to become a Wizard in SHADES. It's tempting to think that the ultimate social distinction is rather easier to attain here than it is in MUD. The pricing isn't bad, either. Provided you play after six o'clock in the evening, the cost works out at 97p per hour, which is billed on your Prestel/Micronet bill at regular intervals.

If you played during the day, you'd have to add a massive 3.60 per hour Prestel connection charge, which would make the game very expensive indeed – especially when you remember to add the cost of the phone call itself – 47p per hour at off-peak rates for a local call, but substantially more during the day. 99% of UK subscribers, by the way, can access Prestel for a local call charge – another advantage over MUD as it stands at present.

Getting Bigger

SHADES has about 700 locations, but this figure changes regularly since a new game database is loaded up with remarkable frequency – sometimes as often as once every two weeks. There are currently about ten mobiles in the game and about 30 treasure items, but as with the locations these change frequently.

However, now that Micronet have got the SHADES hardware up and running properly, and now that they're looking at direct dial possibilities from non-teletext terminals, there's bound to a big leap in the service provided.

"We want to move give Micronet members the widest choice of multi-user entertainment, including second generation MUGs which involve more sophisticated interaction with the user" declared Mike Baron, SHADES technical whizz kid. Part of the problem he reckons, is that most MUGs are rather tame affairs, "You just wander round a database and things happen. What we want to expand is the sense of role-playing and the multi-user element."

There are already certain situations in SHADES where success is only possible through co-operation with other characters, but Mike wants to see these substantially developed. "We could make it possible for people to gang together in groups to achieve certain objectives", he says, "so collaboration becomes more important and players can develop proper relationships with other players."

This all begins to sound rather interesting, muses the Bearded One. Next month, we'll get on-line and give you a demo of SHADES in action . . .

Getting into SHADES . . .

If you're already a Micronet member then you can gain access to SHADES without difficulty. If, however, you don't have a Micronet or Prestel account you can get a brief demonstration of the service by dialling one of the following three numbers:

01 618 1111
041 618 1111
061 618 1111

You should have your modem set up for 1200 baud receive, 75 baud transmit. The data protocol is the same as for MUD and BT Gold.

Once you're connected, you'll be asked for a customer identity number. Enter 4444444444 (ten fours). When asked for a password, enter 4444. The demonstration is primarily of Micronet and Prestel services, but SHADES is dealt with, albeit briefly. Most useful, however, is the facility within the demonstration to order an account if you so desire.



Wizards Mailbag . . .

On-Line Help-Line

Since we've been on the subject of on-line services in this issue, it's worth mentioning a letter from Jason Jennings who writes in asking:

''How about a section for modem computer clubs? I have an advert on Compunet in the D&D section to start an adventure helpline, but unfortunately I haven't had much a response. I would be grateful if you could give me a mention.

''The club is called the AGH (Adventure Games Helpline) and I would be interested in people who want help on games and people who would like to become a member. It doesn't cost a penny to join and is purely a user-user helpline service. For compunet users my ID code is JJ10.''

Not-So-Clever Contacts

The Clever Contacts column continues to generate an extraordinary amount of mail. The question of selling computer game solutions is frequently aired, so perhaps the Wiz had better repeat his judgement on this one – there is NOTHING wrong with selling adventure games solutions. But remember that people who write to the addresses given in the Clever Contacts column are expecting FREE advice, so that means that it is a bit mean to send them a reply asking form money. After all, if they can't afford the advice, they possibly can't afford to waste a stamp in the first place.

However, it's nice to hear **Paul Godden** singing the praises of at least one CC – **Peter Brown**, *'' . . . who replied to my letter IMMEDIATELY''* and **Nigel Morse**, *'' . . . who answered my questions about* Zork I *VERY promptly and politely and is a man who obviously knows what he is talking about. He was just as helpful when I phoned him up.''* Sincere thanks from the Wiz, Peter and Nigel, for upholding the standards of the column.

On a different tack, a rather longer letter from **Rod McKenzie**, who was a little surprised to be asked for solutions by . . . one of the other Clever Contacts! *''OK''*, writes Rod, *''it gets frustrating to be totally stuck. I myself have had help on a couple of games (*Heroes Of Karn *and* Gremlins*) but to my mind playing a game with a solution to hand is a pointless exercise. Do you agree?''*

Yes indeed I do, Rod, but that doesn't mean that those who play and peek are doing anything wrong. If that's the way they get their enjoyment, let them go ahead and don't bother yourself about it.

Stainless Steel What?

''I have been told that an adventure game based on Harry Harrison's Stainless Steel Rat *series exists for the* Commodore 64. *I have looked in old mags, asked at local and not so local shops, and even phoned up the Great Man* (I suppose he means me – Wiz), *but my efforts were unrewarded. You are my last hope. Can you tell me if such a game exists, and if so where can I get a copy. Many thanks and keep up the good work.''*

Well, **Mark 'Slippery Jim' Stevens**, the answer is yes, there is such a game. I seem to recall that it was entitled *Stainless Steel Rat Saves The World . . .* or something like that. I also seem to recall (though I may well be wrong – other readers could enlighten me here) that it was published by Mosaic, who now produce those Level 9 *Adrian Mole* games. Mosaic's number is 01 226 0828.

Absolute Beginners

''Could you please recommend to me an Infocom adventure for absolute beginners as I'm getting very despondent.'' writes **A J Piddock**. Well, Adrian, you could do worse than *Wishbringer*, which was specially devised for beginners and is also (in the Wiz's opinion) and excellent game. Go for it!

Wizard Tips!

Ahar, me ol' wand wagglers. Get a load of these tips, sent in by worthy souls around the world to rescue you from the jaws of the Balrog . . . And as you do, thank the names of **Warren Lee Melia**, **Daniel Doherty**, **Jason Jennings**, and **Nick Carter**.

Wild West

(in the desert at the bull's skull)
It's boring here let's go (3)
Take stone (1)
Let's go (3)
Take stone (1)
Examine skull (2)
Kill the snake (1)
Examine skull (2)
Take the nugget (3)
Move on (3)
Take a rest (1)
When you've done that, the road runner will appear. Carry out the following instructions as quickly as you can as there is a time limit:
Catch the road runner (3)
Run (3)
Let it go (3)
Take a rest (3)
Run as hard as you can (2)
Hang onto coach (1)

HitchHikers Guide To The Galaxy

To get the Babel Fish, hang your Gown on the Hook, cover Drain with Towel, put Ford's Satchel next to the Tiny Robot Panel, put Junk Mail on top of the Satchel, and then press Dispenser Button.

Kentilla

Velnor's Staff and Gold Ring will prevent disintegration if used properly – wear the ring, say SAGAGOO, and hit the Ward.
Insert Rod in Idol to block Sword Arm.
Get the Karush to reflect on things.

Spellbreaker

The Idol is a yawning animated problem.
The Ogre suffers from hayfever. Perhaps some pollen would help . . . Serpent too big? Try taking him down in size.

Borrowed Time

Thugs on your tail? Don't bother with the boys in blue – it's better to rely on trash.

Kayleth

Trapped in a stomach? Give it something to throw up about.

Tass Times

Fungus can help with creatures guarding a gate.

The Institute

A green man not letting you pass? You do need a drink, don't you?

Winter Wonderland

Try cleaning the ice for the pass.

Leather Goddesses

Stuck in the gorilla cage? A Mars a day . . .



Clever Contacts

Once again the White Wizard presents his unique guide to the great adventure brains of the world. Here in this column you will find the names and addresses of those most qualified to assist you in times of trouble. And who knows – you might even make a new friend as well.

Seabase Delta, Zim Sala Bim, Mindshadow, Dracula Part 1
Trevor Attridge, 31 Lower Swaines, Epping CM16 5ER

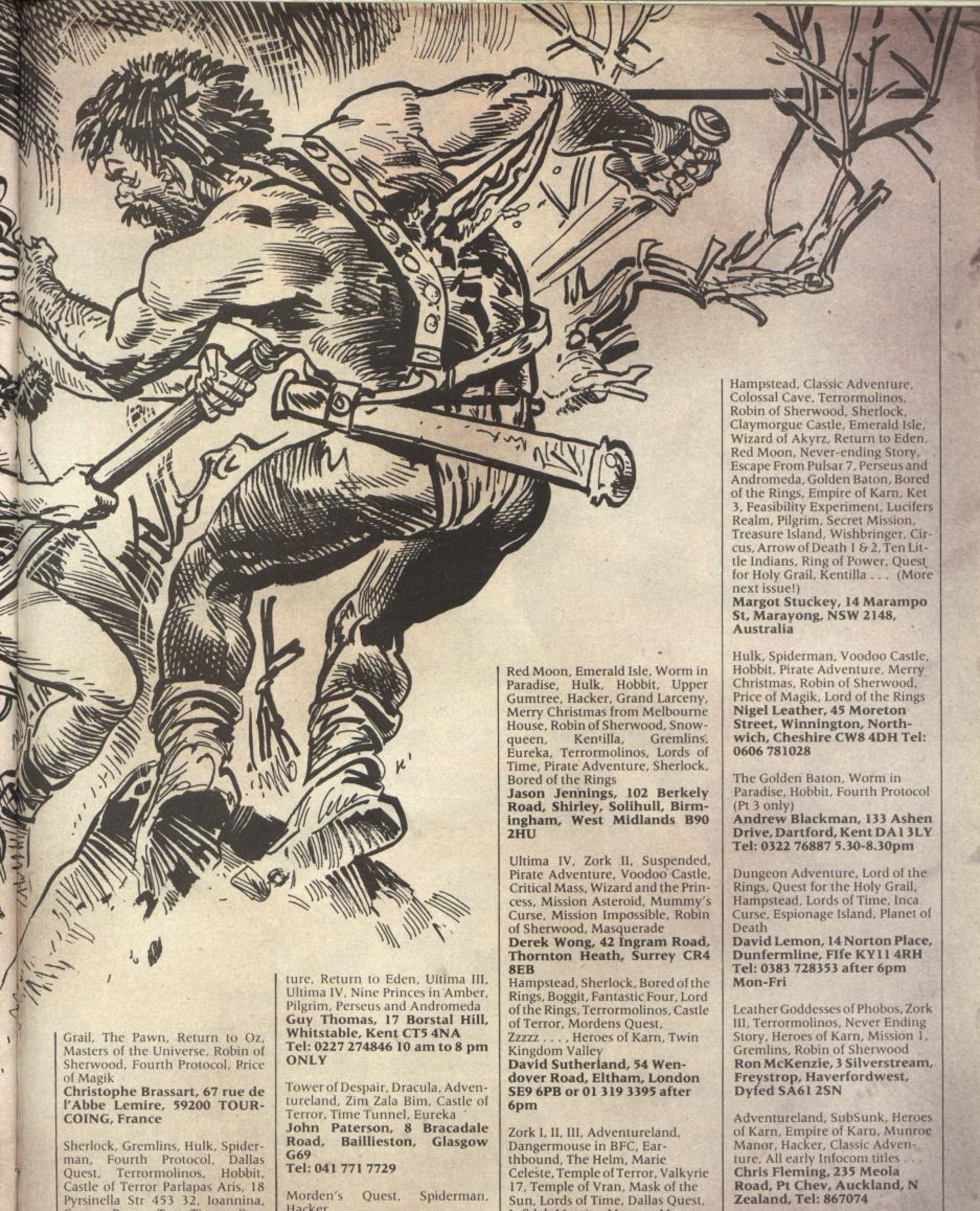
Grand Larceny, Castle of Terror
Darren Sarginson, 12 Leighton Terrace, Birtley, Chester-le-Street, Co Durham DH3 1JN

HitchHikers, Hollywood Hijinx
A Grue (!), Flat 2, 262 Queens Road, Beeston, Notts NG9 2BD
Tel: Nottingham 254954

All Zork games, Enchanter, Sorcerer, HitchHikers, Starcross, Secret of Barstow Manor, Hobbit, Gremlins, Colossal Cave, Dallas Quest
Mark Flavin, 12 Guinea Street, West Kagarah 2217, Sydney, NSW Australia

Adventureland, Adenture Quest, Arrow of Death I & II, Ballyhoo, Blade of Blackpoole, Borrowed Time, Buckaroo Banzai, Castle of Terror, Circus, Colditz, Crystals of Carus, Cutthroats, Dallas Quest, Dungeon Adventure, Emerald Isle, Empire of Karn, Enchanter, Erik the Viking, Escape from Pulsar 7, Espionage Island, Eye of Bain, Feasibility Experiment, Forest at the Worlds End, Ghost Town, Golden Voyage, Gremlins, Gruds in Space, Hampstead, Heroes of Karn, Infidel, Invincible Island, Kayleth, Kentilla, Leather Goddesses, Lords of Time, Lucifers Realm, Magicians Ball, Magic Stone, Mask of the Sun, Mindshadow, Mission Asteroid, Moonmist, Mordon's Quest, Mystery Funhouse, Mystery of Munroe Manor, Ninja, Perseus and Andromeda, Pharaohs Tomb, Pirate Adventure, Planetfall, Pyramid of Doom, Rebel Planet, Red Moon, Return to Eden, Ring of Power, Robin of Sherwood, Savage Island I, Secret Mission, Ship of Doom, Sorceror, Sorceror of Claymorgue Castle, Souls of Darkon, Spellbreaker, Spiderman, Strange Odyssey, Tass Times, Ten Little Indians, The Count, Golden Baton, Hobbit, The Institute, Jewels of Babylon, The Journey, Never Ending Story, Pawn, Time Machine, Wizard and Princess, Quest of Merravid, Tower of Despair, Tracer Sanction, Twin Kingdom Valley, Ultima I, III & IV, Urban Upstart, Ulysses and the Golden Fleece, Valkyrie 17, Velnors Lair, Voodoo Castle, Warlords, Waxworks, Winter Wonderland, Wishbringer, Witches Cauldron, Wizard Akyrz, Wrath of Magra, Zork I, II & III, Zzzzz . . .
Nick Carter, Southampton
Tel: (0703) 474777 2 pm to 10 pm ONLY

Heroes of Karn, Bored of the Rings, Gremlins, Voodoo Castle, Zim Zala Bim, Mugsys Revenge, Tropical Adventure, Dracula, Holy



Grail, The Pawn, Return to Oz, Masters of the Universe, Robin of Sherwood, Fourth Protocol, Price of Magik
Christophe Brassart, 67 rue de l'Abbe Lemire, 59200 TOURCOING, France

Sherlock, Gremlins, Hulk, Spiderman, Fourth Protocol, Dallas Quest, Terrormolinos, Hobbit, Castle of Terror Parlapas Aris, 18 Pyrsinella Str 453 32, Ioannina, Greece Pawn, Tass Times, Borrowed Time, Tracer Sanction, Mindshadow, Starcross, Wishbringer, Seastalker, Ballyhoo, Enchanter, Sorceror, Spellbreaker, Leather Goddesses, Hitchhikers, Hulk, Spiderman, Fantastic Four, Gremlins, Red Moon, Sorcerer of Claymorgue Castle, Worm in Paradise, Dungeon Adventure, Colossal Adventure, Return to Eden, Ultima III, Ultima IV, Nine Princes in Amber, Pilgrim, Perseus and Andromeda
Guy Thomas, 17 Borstal Hill, Whitstable, Kent CT5 4NA Tel: 0227 274846 10 am to 8 pm ONLY

Tower of Despair, Dracula, Adventureland, Zim Zala Bim, Castle of Terror, Time Tunnel, Eureka
John Paterson, 8 Bracadale Road, Baillieston, Glasgow G69
Tel: 041 771 7729

Morden's Quest, Spiderman, Hacker
Nigel 'Nemesis' Richardson Tel: 01 360 8325

Pirate Adventure, Circus, Zzzz, Terrormolinos, Subsunk, The Sorceror of Claymorgue Castle, Quest of Merravid, The Hobbit
Danny Dinneen,
12 Bishopscourt Way, Wilton, Cork, Republic of Ireland

Red Moon, Emerald Isle, Worm in Paradise, Hulk, Hobbit, Upper Gumtree, Hacker, Grand Larceny, Merry Christmas from Melbourne House, Robin of Sherwood, Snowqueen, Kentilla, Gremlins, Eureka, Terrormolinos, Lords of Time, Pirate Adventure, Sherlock, Bored of the Rings
Jason Jennings, 102 Berkely Road, Shirley, Solihull, Birmingham, West Midlands B90 2HU

Ultima IV, Zork II, Suspended, Pirate Adventure, Voodoo Castle, Critical Mass, Wizard and the Princess, Mission Asteroid, Mummy's Curse, Mission Impossible, Robin of Sherwood, Masquerade
Derek Wong, 42 Ingram Road, Thornton Heath, Surrey CR4 8EB
Hampstead, Sherlock, Bored of the Rings, Boggit, Fantastic Four, Lord of the Rings, Terrormolinos, Castle of Terror, Mordens Quest, Zzzzz . . . , Heroes of Karn, Twin Kingdom Valley
David Sutherland, 54 Wendover Road, Eltham, London SE9 6PB or 01 319 3395 after 6pm

Zork I, II, III, Adventureland, Dangermouse in BFC, Earthbound, The Helm, Marie Celeste, Temple of Terror, Valkyrie 17, Temple of Vran, Mask of the Sun, Lords of Time, Dallas Quest, Infidel, Mystery Munroe Manor, Gremlins, Supergran, Planetfall, Ulysses, Blade of Blackpoole, Seastalker, HitchHikers, Ultima III, Search for King Solomons Mines, Skull Island, Murder on the Waterfront, Suspended, Cutthroats, Sorcerer, Enchanter, Ninja, Stranded, Hulk, Mindshadow, Lord of the Rings, Starcross, Sub-Sunk, Worm in Paradise, Hampstead, Classic Adventure, Colossal Cave, Terrormolinos, Robin of Sherwood, Sherlock, Claymorgue Castle, Emerald Isle, Wizard of Akyrz, Return to Eden, Red Moon, Never-ending Story, Escape From Pulsar 7, Perseus and Andromeda, Golden Baton, Bored of the Rings, Empire of Karn, Ket 3, Feasibility Experiment, Lucifers Realm, Pilgrim, Secret Mission, Treasure Island, Wishbringer, Circus, Arrow of Death 1 & 2, Ten Little Indians, Ring of Power, Quest for Holy Grail, Kentilla . . . (More next issue!)
Margot Stuckey, 14 Marampo St, Marayong, NSW 2148, Australia

Hulk, Spiderman, Voodoo Castle, Hobbit, Pirate Adventure, Merry Christmas, Robin of Sherwood, Price of Magik, Lord of the Rings
Nigel Leather, 45 Moreton Street, Winnington, Northwich, Cheshire CW8 4DH Tel: 0606 781028

The Golden Baton, Worm in Paradise, Hobbit, Fourth Protocol (Pt 3 only)
Andrew Blackman, 133 Ashen Drive, Dartford, Kent DA1 3LY Tel: 0322 76887 5.30-8.30pm

Dungeon Adventure, Lord of the Rings, Quest for the Holy Grail, Hampstead, Lords of Time, Inca Curse, Espionage Island, Planet of Death
David Lemon, 14 Norton Place, Dunfermline, FIfe KY11 4RH Tel: 0383 728353 after 6pm Mon-Fri

Leather Goddesses of Phobos, Zork III, Terrormolinos, Never Ending Story, Heroes of Karn, Mission 1, Gremlins, Robin of Sherwood
Ron McKenzie, 3 Silverstream, Freystrop, Haverfordwest, Dyfed SA61 2SN

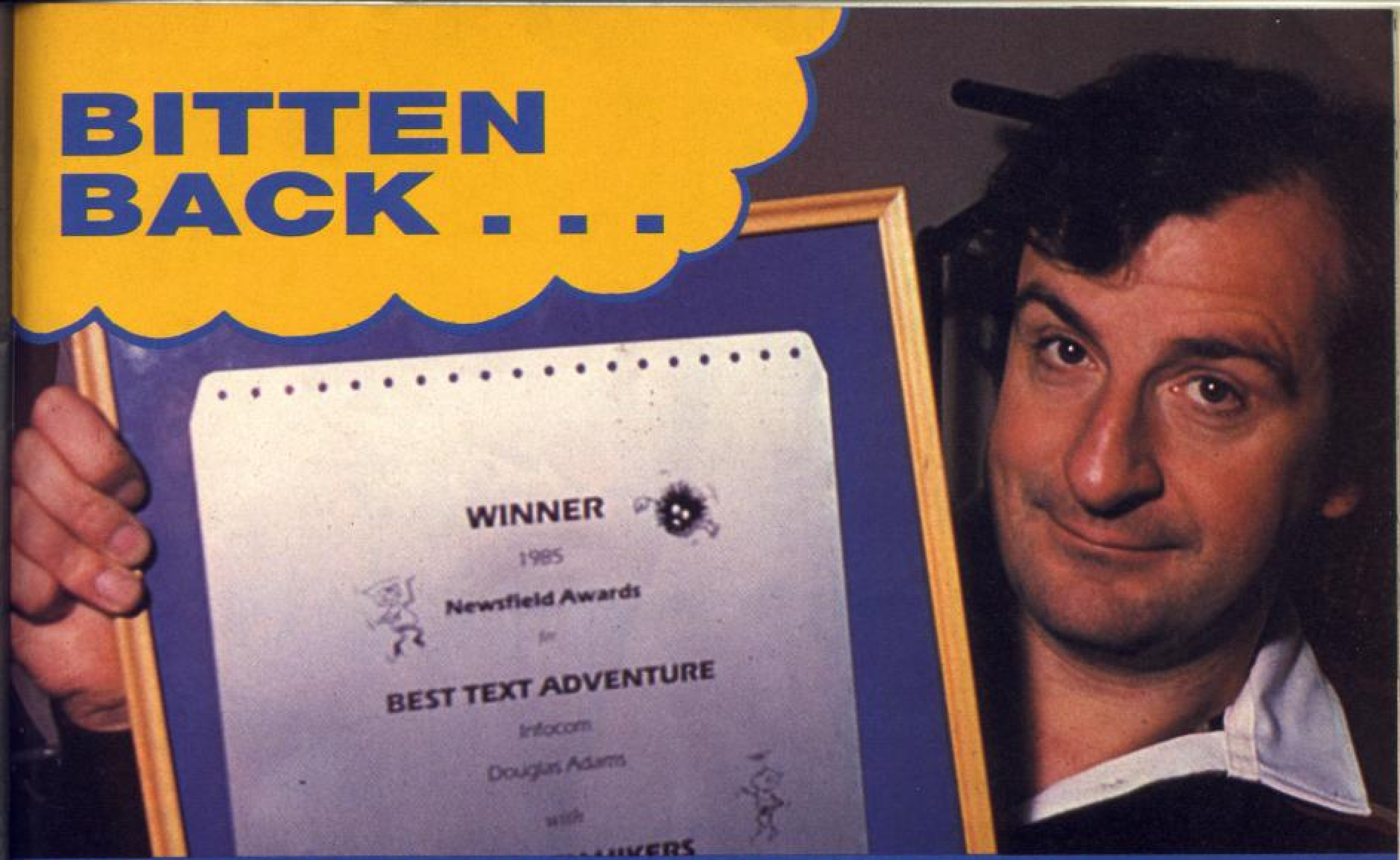
Adventureland, SubSunk, Heroes of Karn, Empire of Karn, Munroe Manor, Hacker, Classic Adventure, All early Infocom titles . . .
Chris Fleming, 235 Meola Road, Pt Chev, Auckland, N Zealand, Tel: 867074

Voodoo Castle, Heroes of Karn, Pirate Adventure, Ten Little Indians, Hobbit, Lost City, Gremlins, Wizard of Akyrz, Quest for the Holy Grail, Zim Sala bim, Island Adventure, Castle Dracula
Paul Flanagan, 6 Corry, Belleek, Co Fermanagh, N Ireland Tel: 036565 594



BELIEVE ME...THERE IS ONLY ONE WAY TO BEAT THE
MUTANTS
KNOW YOUR ENEMY!
I took on the Mutants knowing I was armed to the teeth with missiles, mines, torpedoes and more... I could even choose where I wanted to fight! How could I loose? ...How DID I loose? I've never seen anything like it... they came at me in droves, in swirling gases, in forms spinning a deadly gossamer and there were more to come. I know now that one form of Mutant will never escape a well planned pattern of mines. It's just the beginning... but I must build the ultimate weapon or I'll NEVER be rid of them all!
ocean
COMMODORE
8.95
Ocean Software Limited
6 Central Street · Manchester M2 5NS
Telephone: 061 832 6633 Telex: 669977

BITTEN BACK . . .



A somewhat 'reserved' DOUGLAS ADAMS receives the coveted Newsfield Award for his involvement in Infocom's binary interpreta tion of THE HITCHHIKER'S GUIDE TO THE GALAXY . . . OK, so it's two years late – who's counting?

DOUGLAS ADAMS is a successful author. His radio series, **HitchHiker's Guide To The Galaxy**, formed the basis of a quartet of books that featured Arthur Dent, the only Earthman to survive the destruction of our planet when it got in the way of a planned interstellar by-pass. Mr Adams also worked with Infocom on the eponymous computer game, which collected the 1985 Newsfield Award for Best Text Adventure.

His latest projects involve a new book, **Dirk Gently's Holistic Detective Agency**, and a new computerised adventure, *Bureaucracy* – produced in collaboration with Infocom. Graeme Kidd spent a while talking about Life, The Universe and Everything with Douglas Adams . . . everything to do with computers in particular.

"For a long time I was making my living by making fun of computers – then suddenly they turned round and bit me back . . . "

One room in Douglas Adam's Islington flat is filled with hi-tech musical equipment. A couple of Apple Macintoshes occupy the desk and are used for writing – both music and words.

His latest book follows the adventures of Richard McDuff – a computer programmer with a fascination for the application of fractal mathematics to computer music, who is also suspected of killing his boss. Richard becomes involved in a web of intrigue that is finally unravelled by Dirk Gently, a private detective whose unorthodox methodology involves finding the *whole* solution to problems. Oh, and Dirk saves the entire human race from extinction in the process of clearing Richard's name . . .

Dirk Gently's Holistic Detective Agency was written and typeset on an Apple Macintosh Plus, using LaserAuthor word processing software. The opening credits make proud reference to this fact, and the plot features computers heavily. "This is the first book I've actually written entirely from start to finish on computer – eight to ten hours a day staring at a Mac . . . it's bound to creep in."

Douglas Adams uses computers as tools of his trade, in association with Infocom as a medium for his work, and as recreational devices for producing music. So how did he get involved with computer technology?

"I bought a DEC Rainbow in Los Angeles for word processing . . . the only programs available for it, other than Wordstar-type software, were produced by Infocom. At that point I didn't know anything about computer games – I had seen games where you chase little creatures around mazes, or shoot down little aliens, but they don't really appeal to me. Then I came across the Infocom games and I thought 'great . . . this is literate, intelligent, witty stuff'. Then I was introduced to the company and ended up doing the *HitchHiker's* game, and now there's another game I've collaborated with them on, called *Bureaucracy*.

"Whilst I was working at Infocom one day I went into their development room and there was this funny looking machine they had just got in. It was a development Mac, and I saw it running Macpaint: I've been hooked ever since."

Douglas was working as script editor on **Dr Who** when the first series of **HitchHiker's** was recorded for radio – and he worked with the BBC's radiophonic workshop on both series. Nowadays the equipment in his workroom is more powerful and sophisticated than the hardware used for the sound and musical effects on **Dr Who** and **HitchHiker's**. It proves a distraction – often the musician takes over from the author "I have to be careful . . . I might sit down in the morning to write and decide to play with a tune for a few minutes before I start. Suddenly it's half-way through the afternoon and I've written nothing . . .

"I've always been a musician of a kind, playing guitar and things. I've never actually been a great keyboard player – largely because I didn't practise when I was eleven, as you're supposed to do. I'm also extremely left-handed and don't have much dexterity on the right. The great thing about the computer is if you can write music, then you can just write it on the screen and the computer plays the synthesiser – not only plays the synthesiser but can play several synthesisers at a time and it's like having an entire orchestra at your disposal. If you can write it, you can play it. It's an absolute revelation.

"Music is just a hobby at the moment, and I'm learning it all. There's an awful lot to be learned, and I've mastered quite a lot of the software – stuff like Performer which is a superb package. At some point – I don't quite know when it will be, a few months away certainly, because I've now got to write another book – I would love to sit down and record an album. It sounds in many ways a preposterous thing to do – on the other hand, it's no more preposterous than the idea a few years ago that I could sit down and write a book!"

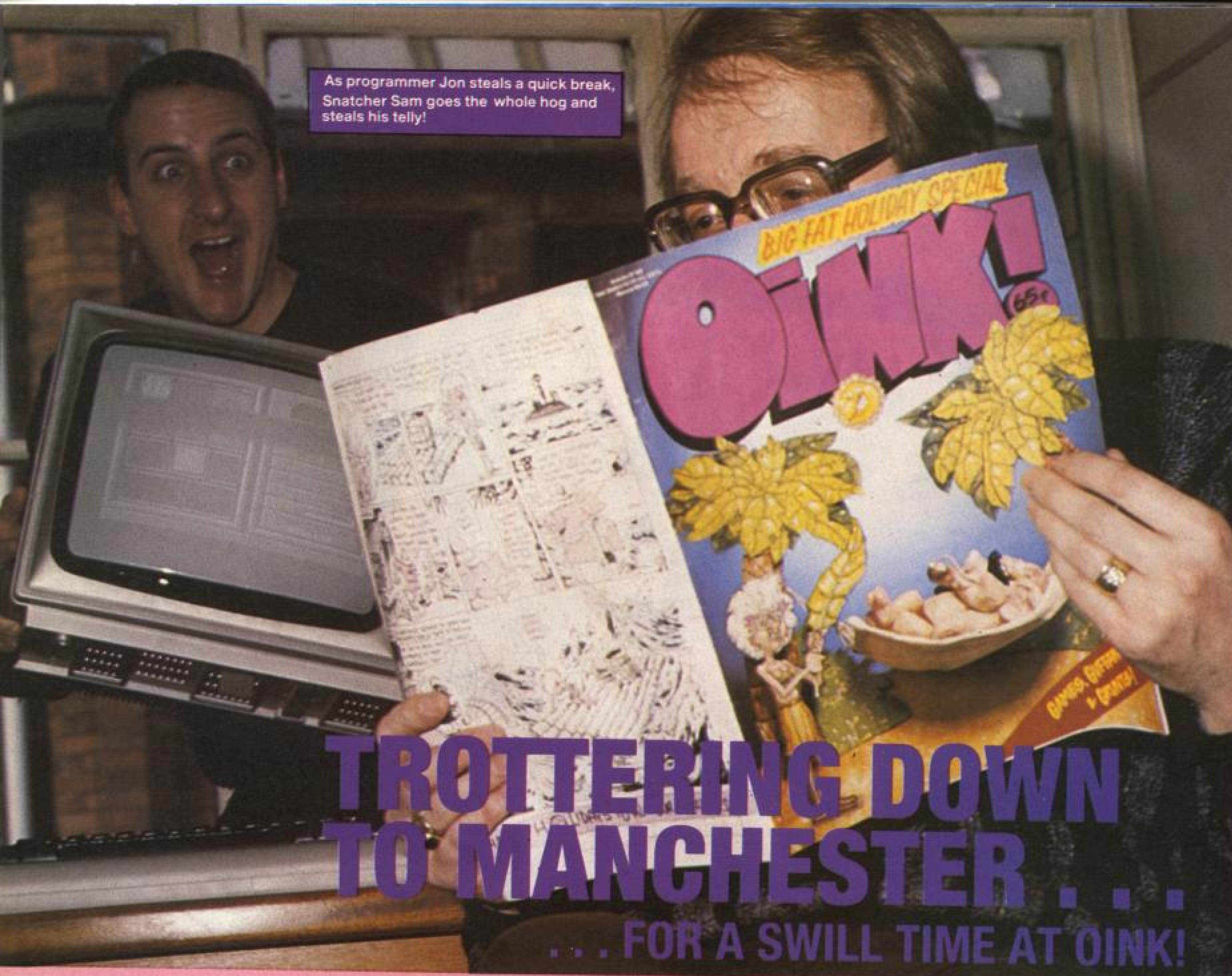
Infocom have just released *Bureaucracy* in America, and it should be available on these shores before too long. The title suggests that the plot involves one of Douglas Adams' favourite topics for poking fun:

"*Bureaucracy* involves you in all kinds of increasingly disastrous and catastrophic adventures. You end up fighting for your life in a jungle and so on, but actually your object is just to get your bank to acknowledge your change of address card. Everything flows from that central impossibility.

"It came from an experience I had when I moved into this place, about six years ago. I got a mortgage from the bank, who I reckoned therefore must be aware of my move, because this represented their security on the loan. I sent them a change of address card all the same, and the next statement they sent to me, they sent to my old address. So I sent them another change of address card and the next statement after that went to my old address. So I wrote them a letter saying, 'you of all people must know the address of my new flat and that I've moved there – and I've sent you two change of address cards'. They wrote back a very apologetic letter saying 'yes of course we do understand, we should have been aware of this . . . we have updated our records and you shouldn't be troubled any further.' And guess where they sent the letter?

"I have a peculiar attraction for this kind of event – I don't know if bureaucracy has a particular go at me because I get so enraged by it . . . "

Since the days of **HitchHiker's**, when he poked fun at computer technology and the people behind it, Douglas Adams has had a change of heart. He uses computers at work and play, and there's little danger of him surviving happily without his Mac. Indeed, he exhibits the classic signs of the computer junkie: "I've just seen the new Mac", he explains, "I was in San Francisco and saw Steve Caps one of the originators. Boy, lust lust lust!"



As programmer Jon steals a quick break, Snatcher Sam goes the whole hog and steals his telly!

TROTTERING DOWN TO MANCHESTER . . .

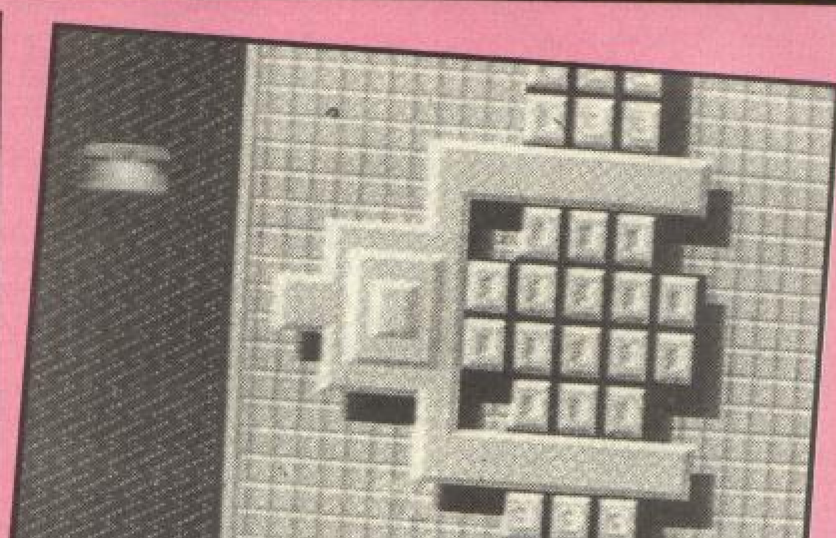
. . . FOR A SWILL TIME AT OINK!

NESTLING IN Manchester town centre, one floor above Simply Red's management, lies the spartan sties – sorry – offices of that swinish magazine **Oink!**

Oink! Publishing was born over a bottle of wine about a year ago. Two of its founders, Mark Rodgers and Patrick Gallagher, were freelance writers for **Whizzer And Chips**, but only met by accident when Mark saw Patrick at work in a library with copies of the comic spread around him. Patrick knew Tony Husband as a cartoonist working on **Whizzer And Chips** and **Buster**. All three were becoming increasingly fed up with the bland nature of their work, and one day, over a few bottles of wine, the conversation turned to the kind of comic they would really like to produce.

The trio started throwing ideas around – never for a moment believing such a publication could get into print as a mainstream comic. A fanzine seemed possible though, so the team set to work at drawing up a few of their early ideas. Tony Husband phoned round other cartoonists, asking them if they would be interested in contributing for fun rather than money, and was met with an enthusiastic response.

The idea of having pigs as central characters – and the title **Oink!** – came from the initial discussion, and before long, enough material for the first issue had been assembled. Taking a bit of a flyer, Tony rang IPC (publishers of **2000 AD**, **Whizzer And Chips** and **Buster** among others) and asked them if they might be interested in the project. A dummy copy was duly sent off, and IPC eventually decided to take the project on and become **Oink!**'s publishers. Patrick, Mark and Tony at last found themselves editing the type of comic which they really wanted to produce.



Breakout – acne-style, with Pete's pus-filled pimple . . . ▲

The first issue of **Oink!** was given away free with **2000 AD**, **Whizzer And Chips** and **Buster**, with the first on-sale issue appearing a fortnight later. This incorporated a free flexidisc which featured a couple of piggy pop tunes. The new, fresh approach paid off and the publication rapidly gained a following amongst young comic-buyers and adults alike. One local radio station even included the record in its top ten playlist!

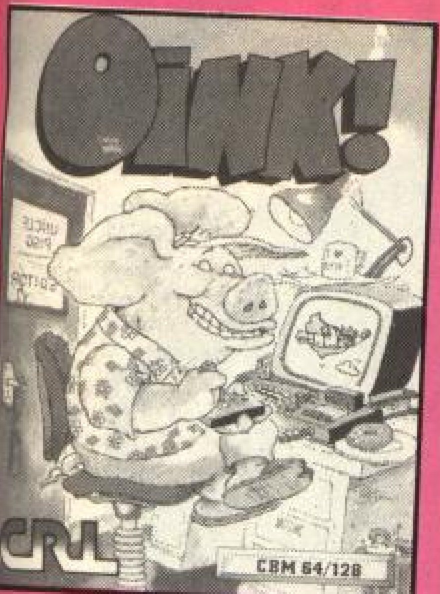
The comic is published fortnightly, featuring regular characters which are anarchic, anti-establishment – and funny. Spoofs on 'traditional' comic characters, TV and films appear from time to time, and each issue has a theme which runs throughout.

Uncle Pigg, the editor, along with other regular piggy characters, fights an endless battle against the evil butchers, while the voice of parental disapproval, Mary Lighthouse, keeps up a constant barrage of complaint. Rubbishman, the smelliest superhero ever created, does battle with baddies (and other idiotic superheroes). Burp, the alien from outer space, zooms round in his flying saucer oozing foul substances from his form and having difficulty with the major organs of his body – they occasionally go out into the wide world on their own.

Oink! has attracted cartoonists who have never worked for 'children's comics' before – including Banx and Haldane – and the team's fresh approach has resulted in a successful formula. **Oink!** has now established itself: the summer special should be in the shops by the time you read this, and an annual is due to appear in August – another record is on the cards . . . and now there's **Oink!** the computer game.

Having obtained the licence to produce a game based on the comic, Software house CRL commissioned freelance programmer Jon Williams to produce a suitably Oinky game. Jon's earlier successes include the C16 *Berk's Trilogy*, and *Jet Boot Jack* and *Knight Games* for the 64 on the English Software label.

Based in Littlehampton, Sussex, Jon works from home and has been programming as a hobby since the early Commodore PET



days. *Oink!* has taken about six months to program, with Jon working a seven day week and often well into the early hours. The final masterpiece bears little resemblance to the initial game design, as both Jon and CRL were constantly adding ideas as the game was written.

Jon has programmed *Oink!* more or less single-handedly, creating the graphics and guiding the game through to completion, thoroughly play-testing it himself. Music and sound effects, however, are not Jon's forté and are currently being completed in-house, by Jay Derrett at CRL's 'Zen room.' As with all of Jon's projects, the music is the last thing to go in, and in the case of *Oink!*, it'll have to be written around the game, which takes up almost the entire 64K's worth of memory.

Oink! – the game, revolves around your attempts to help Uncle Pigg complete the latest edition of the comic, working to the deadline of Midnight on July 6th (The completed comic is then ready for printing on July 7th – Jon's Birthday).

Finishing the copy involves filling in the panels on nine pages, each of which corresponds to a story or feature. Panels are awarded according to the progress made in three sub-games, based on characters from the comic. The sub-games are: Pete's Pimple, a horizontal *Breakout* derivative, using the aforementioned pimple to remove the blocks; Rubbishman, where you guide the caped crude-sader through 100 screens of hazards, avoiding danger and destroying garbage; and finally, Tom Thug appears, driving his Thug mobile around 30 devious screens of maze, collecting keys to allow entry to further sections and gathering page panels as he goes.

The games are played in any order, and you may switch from one to the other as desired. When a panel is filled, the relevant text is displayed, some taken from previous editions of **Oink!**, and the rest specially written by Tony Husband. Tony is very pleased with how the game as turned out, and is especially satisfied that it reflects some of the comic's character and humour.

Oink! will be hitting the streets in May, costing £8.95 on cassette, and £14.95 on disk. Hopefully a full review should appear in next month's magazine.

THE ITALIAN JOB . . .

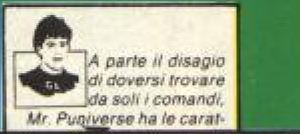
WHAT'S THIS? Pictures of Liddon, Penn, Rignall, Eddy and Sumner spouting incomprehensible spiel (what's new?). Is this really ZZAP! 64? No – not quite, it's ZZAP! (no 64) . . . the Italian equivalent of ZZAP! 64 – and most amusing it is too, what with JR or PS occasionally offering two comments in one review . . .

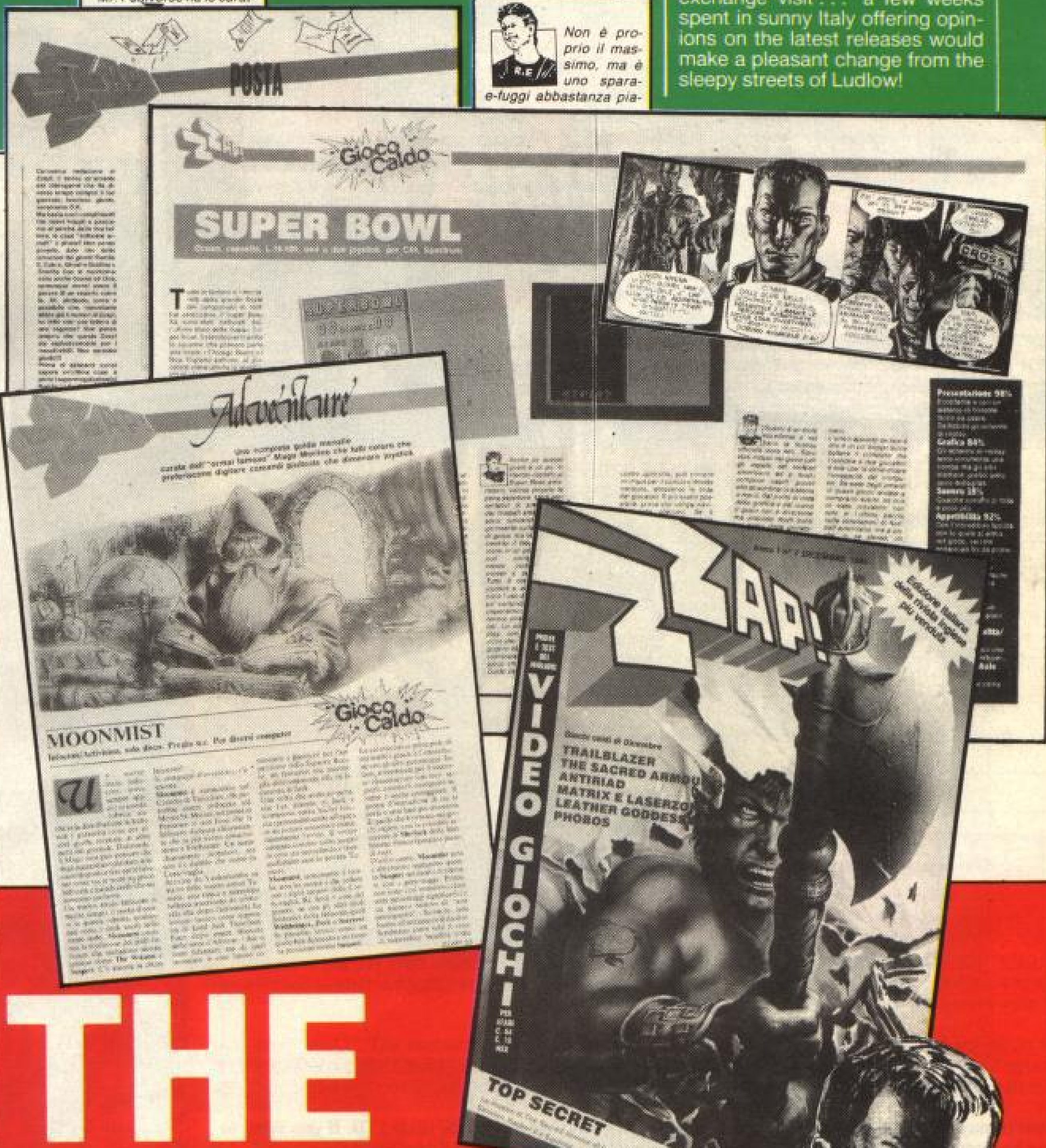
ZZAP! – the Italian version, is published eleven times a year by Hobby SRL (the August issue doesn't appear due to holidays). Apparently, there's no direct competition in Italy, and ZZAP! has managed to achieve estimated sales of 14,000 – sales which are sadly ignored for our ABC, the reason being that our foreign counterpart doesn't carry the same adverts as us.

Most of the text and pictures which appear in ZZAP! are sent from here to Italy, where they are translated into Italian. However, ZZAP! covers not only the Italian 64 software scene, but that of the Spectrum, C16, Atari and MSX – games reviews for these machines are written in Italy. There's an up-to-date coin-op section, a translation of Andrew Braybrook's diary (Procreazione Mentale), a readers' chart (ZZAP! Parade), an adventure section (written by someone called Mago Merlino – better known as the White Wizard) and an Italian Terminal Man! Even some of Mr Penn's editorials have been re-used (they tend to be more enjoyable reading in Italian!). Features such as news, tips (entitled Top Secret and featuring many English tipsters), Scorelord (Datevi Una Mossa) and letters (ZZAP! Posta) tend to be very much 64 orientated.

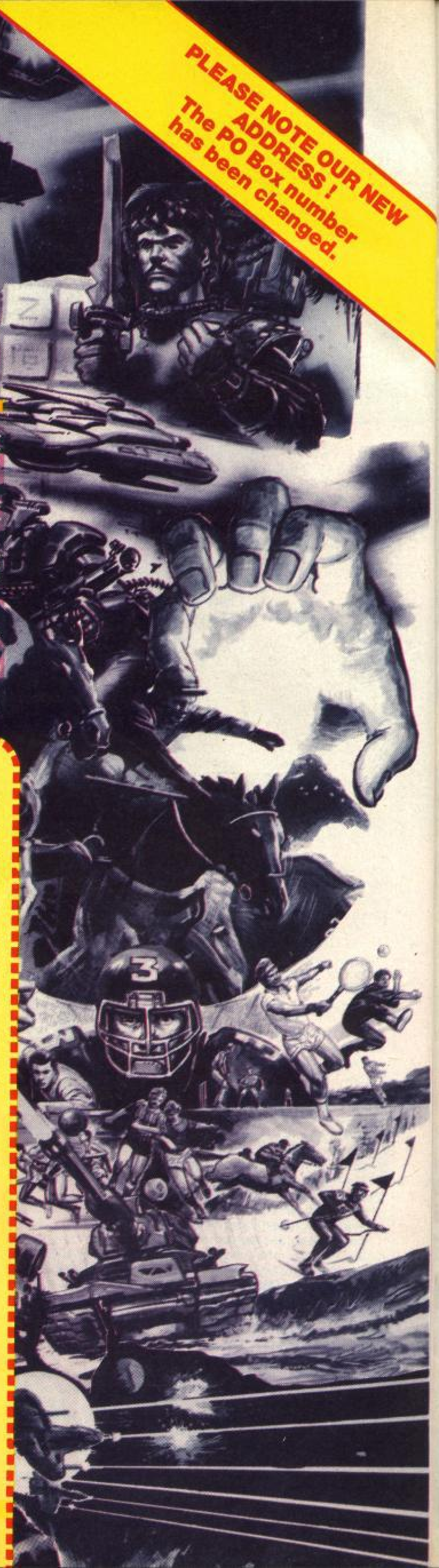
The same ratings system is employed throughout – Prestazione, Grafica, Sondro, Appetibilita, Longevita, Rapporto Qualita/Prezzo and Giudizio Globale (!) – with Gioco Caldo (Sizzler) and Medaglia D'Oro (Gold Medal) awards.

Pity there's no chance of an exchange visit . . . a few weeks spent in sunny Italy offering opinions on the latest releases would make a pleasant change from the sleepy streets of Ludlow!









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A VERITABLE ARCADE IN YOUR VERY OWN FRONT ROOM!

REMEMBER the 'good' old days when you'd walk into an arcade and find such machines as *Space Invaders, Asteroids, Snake* and *Space Wars*? Well now you can bring that halcyon era to your very own living room and reminisce until the cows come home, courtesy of Firebird.

Written by Ubik, a compunet legend in his own lunch-time, *The Big Four Pack* features all four of those classic arcade games. At £1.99 it doesn't take a genius to work out that makes them 50p each (no, but it takes a Rignall – Ed) . . . A bargain and a half indeed.

Also on the arcade front comes the official version of Taito's fabulous *Bubble Bobble*. Firebird have nabbed the licence, and are at this very moment beavering away to bring a conversion to your favourite home micro. More news when we have it.

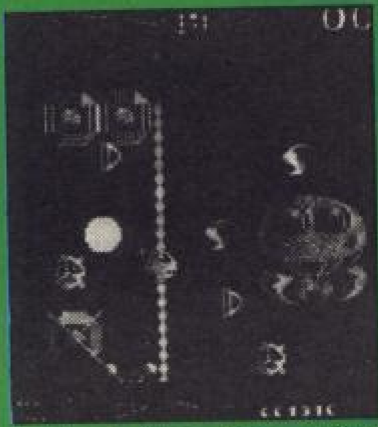
WIZBALL!

COMING next month is a trippy, way out, whacky 'n' zany, oh come all ye faithful, land of hope and glory two-way horizontally scrolling arcade-type colour in the landscape while bashing the hostiles game (phew!). Yes, wait with bated ears for . . . *Wizball*, a Sensible Software production, soon to be released through Ocean's many channels.

It's an odd sort of game (as if you didn't guess) in which the player takes control of the Wiz and his faithful cat and attempts to put some colour back into eight landscapes. Items can be picked up to increase the Wiz's firepower and summon the cat, so the marauding aliens can be battled in earnest.

Features include a strange inertial control method (akin to controlling a pea in a bowl of soup), lovely graphics, four multi-player options and a strange do-it-yourself tune from Martin Galway. Interested? Tell you what – check out the full-colour review in the next issue . . .

THE EVER-GROWING FIREBIRD RANGE



HOT on the heels of the latest Activision re-releases come four more golden oldies – *Futureball, Pyramids Of Time, Pitfall* and *BreakStreet*.

The former is an odd sort of game, where the player takes control of a ball and has to escape from a network of pipes before water floods the whole system. Strange but true, and you only have to wait a month to find out more!

A whacky and way out experience is to be had in *Pyramids Of Time*, written by Russell Leiblich, the author of *Master of the Lamps*, and *Pitfall* is the prequel to *Pitfall II* (see review on page 35). The final offering is the antiquated *BreakStreet*, a breakdancing game which uses giant characters to generate the body-popping action.

Four brand new products are also in the pipeline: *I, Ball*, 'a vertically scrolling shoot 'em up with footballs' which features a Rob Hubbard tune, 'the unique' *Spaced Out* by ex-Imagine and Denton Designs John Gibson, *UFO*, a graphically pretty shoot em up from Odin and *Rainbow Dragon*, a weird and way out game in which you take control of a dragon. Incidentally, it was written by that Helsinki hex hero, Stavros Fasoulas, many moons ago . . .

Look out for them all, soon.

MORE BIG AND MEATY CRUDENESS

IF you cast your mind back to the last issue you may recall that we reported on Palace's new fantasy fighting game, *Barbarian – The Ultimate Warrior*. Remember? The newspiece was illustrated with a photograph of three very odd-looking human beings.

Anyway, a copy has just arrived in our offices, a day after our reviewing schedule closed – so all we can do is write a small preview to further whet your appetite.

It comes in two independently loaded parts. The first is a one or two player head-to-head chop 'em up, where each player takes control of a sword-wielding barbarian. The objective is to gain proficiency in swordsmanship by bashing your opponent into submission. There are 16 smashin' slashin' moves to master, including a repertoire of head-butts, slicin' and dicin' sword sweeps, forward rolls and kicks to the nether regions, as well as a number of defensive moves.

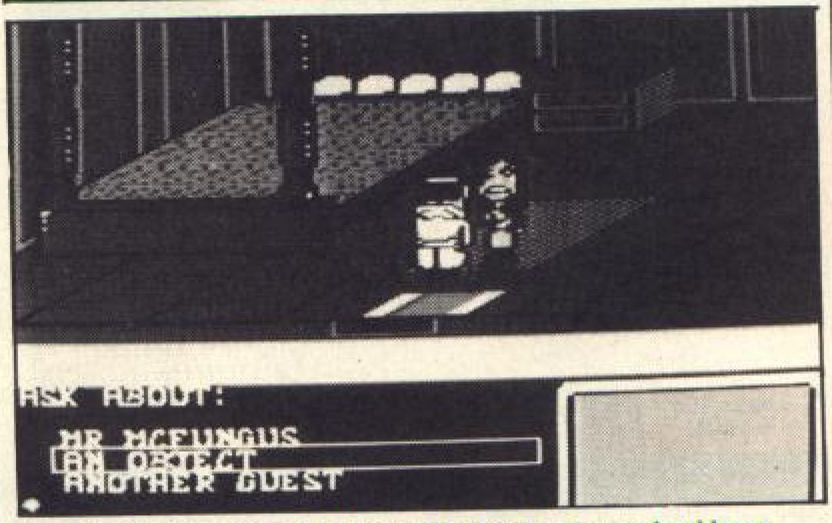
The animation is neat, and there's plenty of life-juice as the muscle men fight for survival. Blood spurts, cuts, gashes and a fabulous decapitation are portrayed in graphic detail – eat your hearts out Board Of Censors . . .

The second section gives the player a chance to test out those newly-discovered fighting skills. A beautiful Princess is being held by the evil Drax, a powerful sorcerer, and it's the player's job to go and rescue her (what else?). The mission can only be achieved by the most skilled of swordspersons, so prepare to battle for your life . . .

The lads have had a quick go (before being chained back to their desks for the rest of the year) and think it's . . . well, you can find out next month, when we publish a full review. Just to show you that we're not all meanies, Steve Jarratt has decided to let you see a screen shot . . .

▼ **A little goblin drags a the body body away. What's the victor going to do now?**





▲ **Chatting to a suspect. Unfortunately there's not enough evidence available to make an arrest.**

WE ARE DETECTIVE

EVER fancied becoming a private eye? Well now your dreams can come true, courtesy of the latest release from Argus Press – *Detective*.

The action begins when you're summoned to the Big House to find out who is behind the recent spate of murders. In true Hercule Poirot style you have to explore the building and collect enough evidence to make an arrest, a task which involves interacting with the other inhabitants of the House.

The forced perspective 3D graphics and big and bold cartoon style sprites are used to add character to the program. Keep an eye out – there's a review next month.

ARMY MOVES

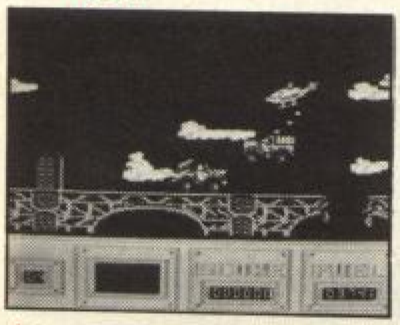
ANOTHER game which arrived just a little too late for our reviewing deadlines is Ocean's *Army Moves*, a seven part horizontally scrolling arcade game originally written by Spanish programming team, Dinamic.

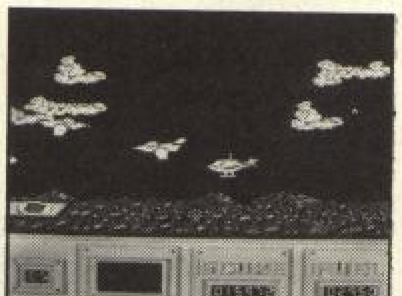
The program puts the player in the position of Captain of the Special Operations Core, a regiment of crack commandos. The military require an especially dangerous mission to be undertaken – one person has to travel deep behind enemy lines and destroy the main GHQ, where secret documents are held. This involves single-handedly taking on the entire enemy force, and battling through seven progressively difficult levels of play.

In the first section the player takes control of a jeep and has to battle with armoured cars and attacking helicopters. Surviving the onslaught for a set duration leads to a helicopter journey with jets and ground-based missile launchers to make the going tricky. The last three stages are tackled on foot, with the player coming up against guerillas, giant toucans, grenade-wielding soldiers, and machine gunners.

As you may have guessed, there's a full review next month . . .

The scoreboard still reads zero and already the future is looking grim for the hero – that jeep and helicopter aren't a welcome committee . . .





Jets are constantly on the attack to stop the chopper flying any deeper into enemy territory

AND FOR THOSE BUDDING CROOKS WHO ARE STILL WAITING . . .

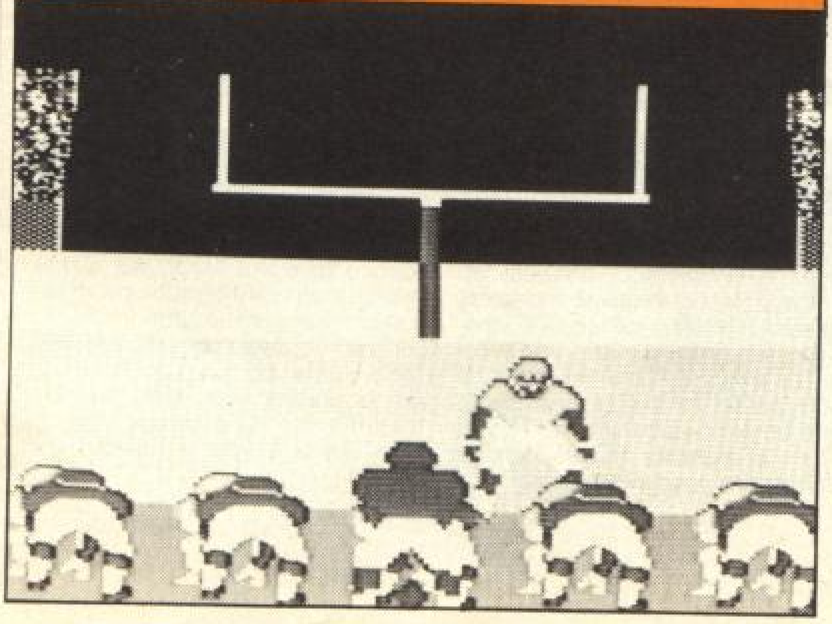
THOSE of you who liked the sound of ZZAP! Sizzler, *They Stole A Million*, but have been unable to find it their local shop – fear not. There have been production delays at Ariolasoft, which means that their innovative game based on devious criminal activities has been unavoidably detained. It is now, however, being released on the 23rd April, and should be widely available thereafter. Price tags will read £9.99 on cassette, and £14.99 on disk. What a steal!

AMERICAN FOOTBALLERS

NEXT month Julian Rignall will be looking at a wide variety of Commodore American Football simulations including *Head Coach*, *Super Sunday* and *GFL Championship Football*.

The latter is a simply amazing program which sets new standards in football simulations. Featuring interactive first-person 3D views through the visor, easy to plan moves, one or two player action and speech it looks to be something really special. Can you wait? Jaz can't . . .

First down and goal to go – you've got a split second to decide which way to run. A typical example of the 3D action in Activision's new *GFL Football*



MASKERADE AT GREMLIN

GREMLIN GRAPHIC'S next release will be *MASK*, based on the cartoon series of the same name. Programmed by the team behind US Gold's *Gauntlet*, the game follows the exploits of Matt Trakker and the MASK agents in their continuing battle between Earth and VENOM (Vicious Evil Network Of Mayhem).

Several MASK agents have been abducted and left stranded throughout space and time, leaving Matt to do some nifty temporal Trakking in order to rescue his fellow agents. Only once the team is together again can they mount a final assault on VENOM, and secure the safety of planet Earth.

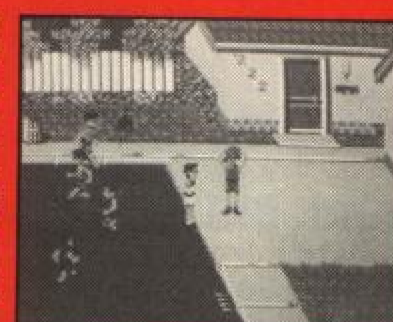
In each time zone, Matt must repel attacks from VENOM, avoid numerous perils and find both the agent and his 'mask' – all within a certain time limit.

Matt is heavily armed and trundles around in his personal transport, Thunderhawk, which also comes under attack and has to be repaired at intervals throughout the game.

MASK is due for release around the beginning of July, and we'll keep you posted till then.

STREET SPORTS BASKETBALL

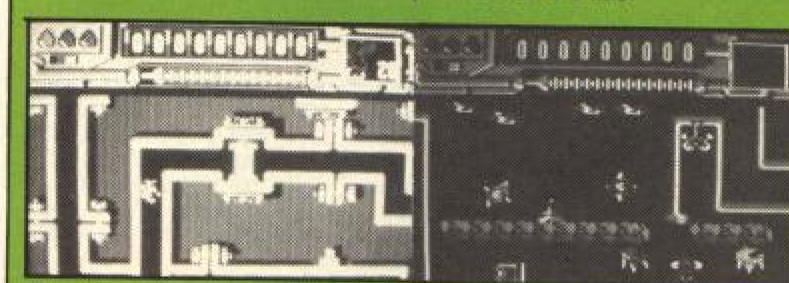
SEEN here is a screenshot of *Street Sports Basketball*, coming soon from Epyx via US Gold. Written by Andrew Spencer, the author of the classic Commodore ROM *International Soccer*, this promises to be an improvement over his *International Basketball*, as released by Commodore a few years back. It certainly looks better – but it will probably be a few weeks before we find out if it plays any better.



A COUPLE OF SNIPPETS

THAT margin star on a spring, Thing, will soon be bouncing back onto your 64 in *Thing Bounces back*, which continues his adventures in the toy-maker's factory as he once again attempts to foil the Evil Goblin.

And for all those Charles Bronson acolytes out there . . . *Deathwish III – the computer game* will be available around August time. Unfortunately there are no other details as yet because work hasn't started on the title.



Thing Bounces Back – and from what we've seen it looks like he's gone through a strange physical transformation . . .

SKIMMING THE SHADOWS

MARTIN SNEAP (better known as MAT to those Compunet users amongst you), author of *Knucklebusters*, is currently working on the 64 version of the Spectrum shoot 'em up, *Shadow Skimmer*. The game promises fast and furious space action, smooth scrolling backdrops and excellent music.

Up for grabs at £8.95 on cassette and £12.95 on a floppy, the game is hoped to be available from 11th May. Let's hope so.

KNIGHT GAMES II

TAKING a well-earned break from his latest porcine programming project, *Oink!*, Jon Williams, author of *Knight Games* is being commissioned to begin work on its sequel: *Knight Games II*. Still at the planning stage, there's not much information just yet, but as soon as any becomes available you'll be the first to hear.

MENTAL PROCREATION

By Andrew Braybrook

After four months of hard labour (ouch), ante-natal depression has reared its ugly head – and a huffy Andrew Braybrook relates his experiences with soft and hardware problems, piracy, and computer magazines' reviews . . .

Wednesday 18th March

Got back from Chicago yesterday (place dropper) so it's back to *Morpheus* today. To compact my sprites and still be able to use them I have to write a de-compact sprite routine for the game, create the sprites I want and compact them in the first place. The de-compaction was easy, it just converts the data for one sprite into its real image. Since the images will be small, they will be a small clump of data with zeroes before and after it. I shall convert the leading zeroes to a one-byte count, and specify the size of the central data clump. This should convert each 64 byte sprite down to a more-manageable 15 or so – quite a saving.

Confession: I don't actually have *any* sprites for this system drawn up yet, I've not been able to draw anything that I regard as suitable. To get the data compacted I decided to write a BASIC program. It is easier to stop and can report errors in a more friendly fashion than just setting the border colour. Of course it will be a lot slower, but I won't be running it too often – I can survive on test data for a long time.

I've been thinking about the sprite combining system and have decided that the X and Y reflections are unsuitable, as images will be drawn with light coming from one side so any reflection will cause an incorrect image. I will have to produce any reflected images myself.

The materialisation sequence is also causing some concern, but with some fancy raster splitting I may be able to draw up a second character set with a see-through ship and combine it with the current ship, then fade it out by converting the data to run through the grey shades.

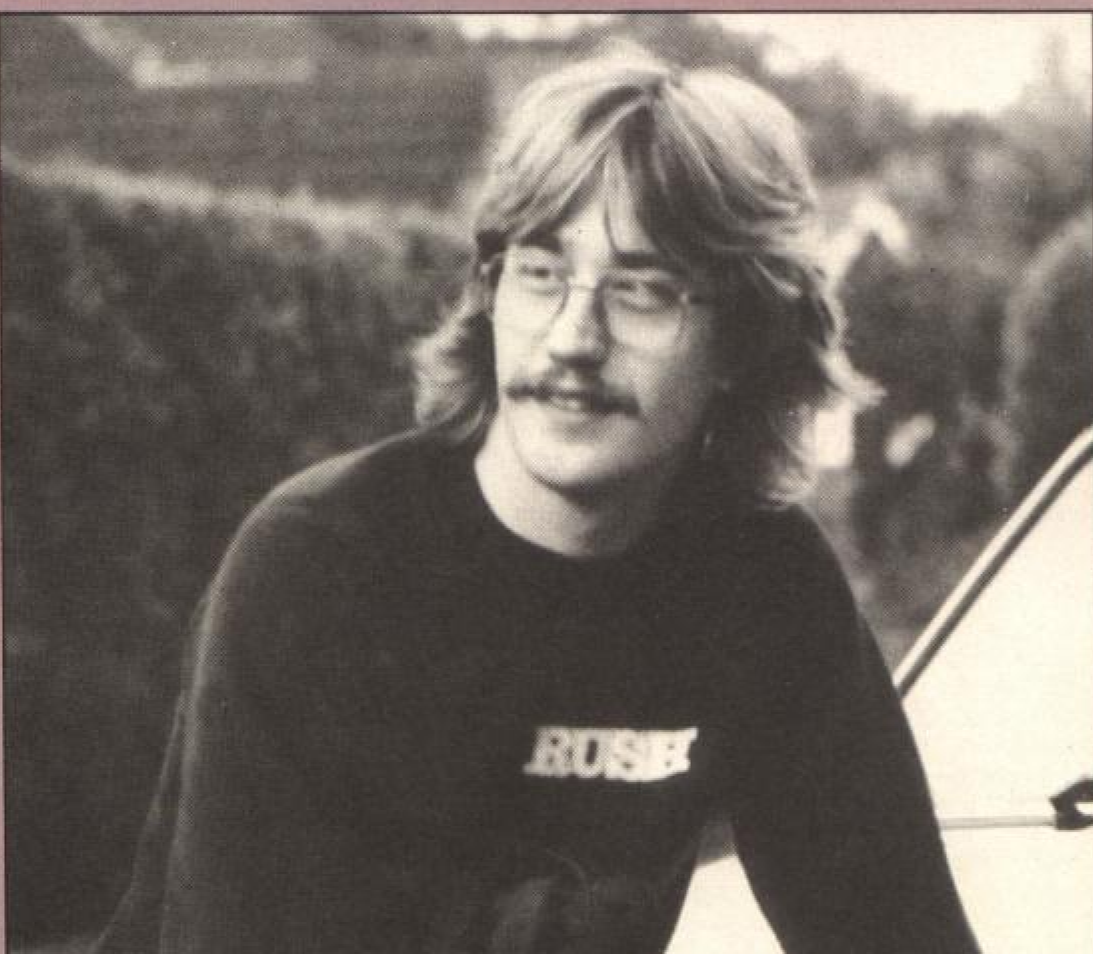
Thursday 19th March

This dematerialisation thing is all round the wrong way. I've been looking at it from a camera's point of view. The film director would watch the ship disappear from the docking bay, fade the picture, fade back in on another part of space, then rematerialise the ship. However I think I should be looking at this from the ship's viewpoint, or at least a remote camera associated with the ship. Thus the grid and stars would fade into nothing, leaving the ship, then the new stars would fade back in. My big problem has been separating the ship from the grid, I can't just split the screen since the ship can overlay the grid by up to two characters, and both are built from the same character set. I've sort of boxed myself into a corner by attempting to extend what I'm achieving on the C64. I do still have all the sprites free so I may be able to second them for some evil purpose.

I think the reason why there has been a spate of vertical or horizontal scrolling games is that those particular formats are best when using most of the C64s capabilities. It's nice to extend the playing arena for the game, and the C64 hardware was designed to help this. In *Morpheus* I'm attempting not to use the smooth scrolling facilities which make up a large part of that distinctive Commodore look. I therefore have to push further in other departments to end up with a satisfying product, like the gameplay.

I'm not having much luck designing any suitable sprites. I had a quick thrash on the sprite editor but didn't produce anything particularly

All in a Rush (double ouch) . . . a pensive moment, in which Andrew ponders on the meaning of life, the universe, and Hewson's deadlines . . .



inspiring. Sometimes it gets like that.

Friday 20th March
Day off.

Monday 23rd March
Tried to get some sprites drawn on the sprite editor. I's difficult to visualise the game when you don't know what half the graphics look like. I remember *Paradroid* went through a stage like this. I still want to avoid the same old spaceship designs, and with a sixteen-frame animation system I ought to be able to come up with something . . .

After a few hours I gave up, having produced nothing of any use to man or beast. I brought in the Amiga today so I decided to fire up Deluxe Paint and try to draw some sprites with that. I enhanced my *Morpheus* mock-up picture for inspiration, but no sprites were forthcoming.

Tuesday 24th March
Went to Hewson's to discuss life, the Universe and everything. Apparently I have to finish *Morpheus* this year!

"ST was trying to communicate with extra-terrestrials by waving an RS-232 lead in a skywards direction, which was causing pretty patterns to appear on the Spectrum . . . "

Wednesday 25th March
A day of judgement. I think I may have an overall sprite style. I need to show which of two factions each sprite belongs to, its strength, and they have to be able to move in any direction without looking as if they're going backwards. The game scenario is also evolving. In the beginning there was a pretty star in the middle of nowhere. A small reaction in the heart of the star produced two split particles which split from the star in opposite directions. These each split into two and each one split again. These particles then begin to drift towards their respective partners, and when they meet, fireworks. Your mission Jim, should you choose to accept it, is to bring the particles together more gently by capturing particles from one charge centre and deploying them at the other. Two particles of equal but opposite charge will cancel each other out, but two like particles will combine and become stronger. I also hope to introduce neutral charges and photons to upset the situation.

On the coding front I'm not happy with the star rotation, it's slow and heavy on CPU usage. There's enough work to do running 32 moving objects, so the star rotation is out. I've coded the grid fade-out routine which took all of 15 minutes to write as an existing routine was easily modified to carry out this task. Now I can fade out the multi-layered grid slowly or quickly, and while it is moving to choreograph the docking sequence using existing routines.

ST meanwhile, having written Amstrad *Ranarama* in two weeks flat, was trying to communicate with extra-terrestrials by waving an RS-232 lead in a skywards direction, which was causing pretty patterns to appear on the Spectrum. Why bother to build an interplanetary craft when you can use RS-232 . . . Aaarrgh!

Thursday 26th March
I've actually managed to rustle up a few sprites – hang out the flags! I needed an animation sequence to show two objects cancelling each other out, so I drew an implosion sequence which involves a circle of dots spiralling inwards, followed by a twinkle. This takes fourteen frames of animation in total. I also enhanced the docking bay sprites slightly and put them all together ready for inclusion in the game. I'm getting a better idea of memory usage now, so I can so I can put various chunks of data in their final places.

I then set up the colour table for the sprites that I have drawn, each sprite image always being the same colour. I can modify this table 'in-flight' to cause glowing effects and such-like, so it's not too restricting, and saves me a lot of time not having to worry about getting the colours right during the game.

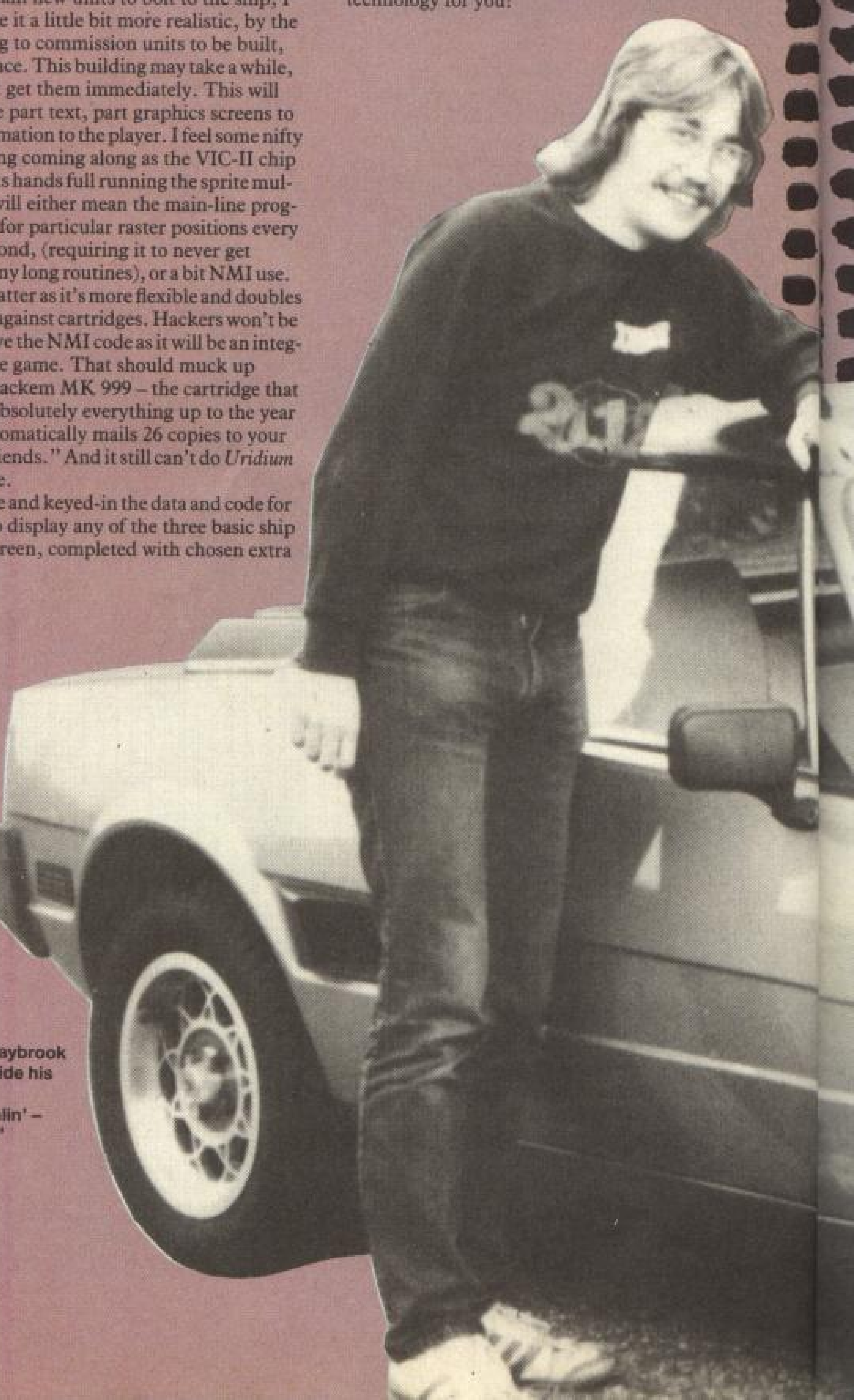
We're having minor equipment troubles, the 1570 needs a dab of glue as it's getting a bit tetchy, the 1541 won't read anything, ST has blown up the C64 and the 1541 analyser disk has a read error on it! I'm also still trying to soak out the coffee from my Amiga keyboard which causes some keys to stick, so it's not been our day. ST is keying in the sound routine on the PC and will be making further enhancements to it, probably in a mixture of 6502 and Z80!

Friday 27th March
Started to sort out the game structure. The game will involve frequent returns to the docking bay for information updates and ship repairs. Rather than just obtain new units to bolt to the ship, I want to make it a little bit more realistic, by the player having to commission units to be built, cash in advance. This building may take a while, so you won't get them immediately. This will require some part text, part graphics screens to supply information to the player. I feel some nifty raster splitting coming along as the VIC-II chip already has its hands full running the sprite multiplexor. It will either mean the main-line program waiting for particular raster positions every 50th of a second, (requiring it to never get involved in any long routines), or a bit NMI use. I favour the latter as it's more flexible and doubles as a security against cartridges. Hackers won't be able to remove the NMI code as it will be an integral part of the game. That should muck up "Supadupahackem MK 999 – the cartridge that breaks into absolutely everything up to the year 1997 and automatically mails 26 copies to your family and friends." And it still can't do *Uridium Plus*, chuckle.

I also wrote and keyed-in the data and code for the system to display any of the three basic ship layouts on screen, completed with chosen extra weapons and systems. Now that I can use local labels with the cross-assembler I don't have to wrack my brain coming up with six-letter unique names like RFLOP3, I can just put . . . LOOP everywhere. I bet I'll regret it when I try to understand this code in a year's time.

"My Amiga appears to be decaffeinated too!"

Monday 30th March
Had a long duel with the cross-assembler today, cross being the operative word. I wanted to do the equivalent of a GO TO DEPENDING ON using an assembler macro, which is basically a way of inventing your own assembler commands. The assembler however insisted on producing 27 error messages, all for one line, where I had to use this new command called JUMPY. No clues were given, just a bundle of error messages like "Labels not allowed here." Where, you stubborn goat of an assembler? Give me a clue. Finally we decided that the assembler has a bug in it as it doesn't evaluate parameters properly in a FOR-NEXT loop. Thus I had to key in the same thing nine times, twice. There's modern technology for you!



Boy Racer Braybrook poses alongside his Fiat X19 . . . "Awlrightdahlin' – fancy a ride?"

Some technical problems resolved, the 1570 only won't read disks when the PC is switched on. It's getting zapped by magnetic radiation. The solution? Always switch off the PC when loading from disk. Probably not, move the 1570 to pastures new. This means that I can screw the top back on it, as currently I have the cabriolet model 1570 Ghia for easy maintenance!

ST now thinks that the C64 that we sent for repair isn't blown up after all, it wouldn't load because the C2N had thrown a wobbly. That's now all crated up ready for repair. Wonder if they'll find anything wrong with the C64? My Amiga appears to be de-caffeinated too!

As far as *Morpheus* is concerned I roughly know what the control mode is supposed to do, but I'm giving the player more freedom so it's going to be a little more cumbersome to learn fully. I shall try to introduce the new features during the course of the game rather than have them all available at the start. The game has to be instantly accessible.

Tuesday 31st March

Tested the new routines to display the three configurations of ship. I only noticed after a couple of tests that no ship at all had appeared. This was simply because I hadn't told it which of the three ships I wanted. I was lucky that it didn't crash as it had been reading random data, but unfortunately my routines tend to have plenty of 'exit on error' clauses to prevent such catastrophes. After correcting a couple of blocks with the wrong numbers in, I am now the proud owner of a rounded-metal ship construction kit.

ST and I had a discussion on whether I should set up the ship with the front facing left or right, I wanted it to be left as it would be different from most other games. Had you noticed that more games play facing right? For example: *Scramble*, *Nemesis*. I can't think of any that only play to the left. This is partly because we read things from left to right, our brains are more accustomed to the movement. If I set my default direction the other way round it may subconsciously jar with the brain, putting people off the game. So, even though my ship will move in all directions (not all at once, incidentally, unless you overheat the engines) I shall configure it to face to the right. This means that two of my thus far created eleven blocks are already redundant as they face left only, I guess some prototypes never make it. It does free up some more graphics space though.

"I hope I never get stuck in a lift with any miserable types who didn't find it amusing!"

Wednesday 1st April

I've got three different sized ships on screen and this morning I thought of another configuration, so that makes four, which is a nice number for a programmer to deal with. The system that ignores or displays extra weapons pods on the ship is also working. This system can also display the landing pad for the remote ship to be launched from.

The game can now display the docking bay of its own free will. I no longer have to set its variables up using the monitor. It's all starting to fit together. I happened to notice that not many stars were being displayed in the bottom half of the screen. Upon checking I discovered a remnant from the rotating starfield days. A quick cut and thrust of the delete key and it's gone.

I also pottered about with the character graphics to design some new pieces for the ship, and keyed in polar to X-Y vector conversion table, 512 bytes of juicy hex to allow eight speeds in 32 directions. I should now be able to generate better circular movements.

I gather that some people have tried my little 6510 accelerator. Okay so it doesn't quite speed up the C64 to mega speeds but you have to laugh. It seems to have taken anything from fifteen minutes to two hours to key in depending on manual dexterity. Lucky I didn't pad it out too much, eh?

It's interesting to study people's reaction to the hoax, one or two people were apparently very grumpy indeed, hurling abuse in all directions. I reckon that just shows the Human animal for what it is. Greed had set in at the thought of gaining extra CPU wellie for nothing and then it was snatched away. I hope I never get stuck in a lift with any miserable types who didn't find it amusing!

Thursday 2nd April

Designed some graphics for what I'll call the system blocks. Each ship configuration can carry a number of these, two on the smallest ship, up to eight on the largest. These system blocks will be for additional 'passive' systems on the ship, no weapons, but additional energy, charge holders, tractor beams and the like. These will be prime targets for the enemy and may be destroyed. Up to 32 system blocks are being budgeted for, each with its own colour scheme. The energy display block consists of eight frames of animation and its speed of rotation will show the ships energy. I will need a system to plot these blocks into the character set. Only eight blocks are needed on the biggest ship at four character a piece, so I have reserved 32 (that magic number again) characters for these. I couldn't afford the space for 32 different blocks in the character set as there are only 256 available, so plotting these on screen will involve updating the character set in-flight. I don't want to push the timing so I'll have to devise a routine to plot explosion frames only on cycles where the energy display isn't being plotted. I may then have to queue up any further explosions although I don't think that too many explosions will occur at once.

"In about a four hundredths of a second I'll ring the fire bell and you go and change the character set."

Friday 3rd April

I had wanted to display the starfield with the text character set for some time. The difficulty was that it required 48 star characters in both charac-



ter sets. Having accepted this as a necessary overhead I wanted to use this fact to combine text and graphics on screen simultaneously. Not just a simple split screen but more integrated.

This involves raster splitting and created the dilemma mentioned earlier (27th March). I can't use full blown raster splitting for screen changes as the VIC chip is already using these. Thus I must try using the NMI time which is like an alarm clock that tips the bed over, ie: you *do* wake up immediately. I couldn't quite see how to use only one set of interrupt routines to run either a straight graphics screen or a mixed screen. I then worked out how much extra coding is required to split the screen, and it's quite minimal. So one set of interrupts runs all the time, but in graphics-only mode the splitting just gets the same character set instead of a different one. The game has to function correctly in either mode anyway so it's no real overhead running a small quantity of unnecessary code all the time. It's a case of by the time you've worked out which function to carry out, you could have done them both anyway.

Of course the structured approach would be to just duplicate one and a half Kilobytes of code to create two interrupt systems and change one instruction, however, on a limited memory system this is not particularly practical. Anyway I implemented the NMI timer system which takes its cue form the top raster interrupt that sets the first sprites. This starts a timer which basically says:

"In about a four hundredths of a second I'll ring the fire bell and you go and change the character set."

This routine then sets the timer for the next split, four times in all down the screen. This also has the beneficial side-effect that it screws up ALL cartridges, including the ones that claim to the contrary (they just don't test them on *AlleyKat*, *Uridium Plus*, *Terra Cresta*, etc).

"Sorry couldn't find them in the shop." Well, they were looking in the local greengrocers! Very exhaustive test I must say. My name's Ben Elton, goodnight!

Monday 6th April

I found it quite disturbing to read one of Mr Mangram's replies in the May ZZAP! Rrap regarding reviews, which posed:

"Which would you prefer, an earlier black and white review . . . or a full colour review a whole month later?" This has been echoed by Commodore User recently claiming to be first with this review and first with that review.

Well, since I'm on the receiving end of the review I figure that having spent six months producing a game, it deserves an accurate review, not to be treated like another lump of nothing on a production line. How can it possibly get an accurate review if the reviewers are simply trying to be first to get to print?

The game should be played on and off for a couple of weeks, how else can you test lastability? Surely you'd rather read an accurate appraisal of a game, so what if it is a month later than a bad one. If you're like me you wait for *all* the reviews anyway, so whoever got the review out first will be forgotten!

Also, since the magazines get early review copies of the game then the review could well appear before the game is available anyway. That just frustrates you, upsets the shops and wastes everybody's time. Applying this to *Morpheus*, I hope to finish it by the end of June, but it is unlikely to be released before September as the packaging and advertising will then go into full swing.

I think it's ultimately up to you, the games players, to write to the magazines, especially if the standard of review is slipping. Tell them you want accuracy of facts with plenty of detail. Colour is obviously preferable as this is how most of you will see the game, and you don't just want regurgitated instructions, anybody can do that, you want an objective review of what the game is like to play, what new original features the game contains. Am I right or am I right?

I put together most of the undocking sequence today. The ship now accelerates to the right, the stars and grids moving in the opposite direction. The grid then fades out and the stars change. The stars changing gives me a sneaky chance to build the required sprites over the old grid data. The only thing not yet in is the docking bay relative movement, it should gracefully scroll off, but at present it just sits there. This will all be tied-in to the sprite movement system, so I'll leave that for now.

It's a long time since I've had the grid off the screen. It needs the full screen size to give the 3D effect more impact, and it gives me a better idea of the playing area size. With a large ship with all its extensions it's nearly the full screen height.

Tuesday 7th April

I've rooted out a major stumbling block in the theory of the gameplay. I wanted two particles or charge centres to split from a star. These would be of opposite polarity, I then wanted them to split again into two particles of opposite polarity, and finally split again. This raised the problem that an already negative particle can't really split into a negative and a positive one. It would have to split in another 'dimension', not necessarily a physical one, but a mathematical one, for example: matter/anti-matter, positive/negative clockwise spin/anti-clockwise spin, red/blue, whatever, provided the two opposites cancel each other out, the last example simply being an arbitrary rule, which is all that a game really is, a collection of arbitrary rules. Whether you match these to a real sport, or a simulation of some physical process or something totally abstract is entirely up to the programmer. I think that may define the originality of a game or a clone, whereby a clone game has attempted to copy the arbitrary rules of another, it's just worse if they nick the graphics and sound as well! But back to splitting particles. I can't really justify multiple splitting, it just complicates the situation. I've resolved this by just having one split from a central star, although into more than two parts.

In experimenting with the polar vectors I've begun to compose the title screen sequence, using routines that will be used in the game too. I now have a many-coloured central star which can randomly spit out particles, in circles or in spirals. This also allowed me to check the polar vector table that I keyed in recently. I told the particles to stop moving when they left the screen, sensible enough I thought, I'd rather they didn't float about through memory. Instead the ones that left off the top bounced back and rained down the screen. This gave rise to the programmer's war-cry of: "That can't possibly happen!" Quite often bugs cause things to occur that haven't been programmed in yet, or things occur that you wouldn't be able to program in a month of Sundays, if you tried. This one turned out to be miskeyed data in the polar vector table on the one number out of 512 that I happened to set the particles to as they left the screen to stop them. Glad I found it at this stage rather than when the data will be used for sprite movements.

" . . . we decided that the only course of action was to operate . . . "

Wednesday 8th April

The Opus has been causing some concern as it has not been reading from 'Drive A' properly, which is a blow because it reads all of its boot-up instructions from it, so we can't run anything. Upon the advice of the suppliers we decided that the only course of action was to operate, just an exploratory to discover whether the drive or the disk controller was at fault. We swapped the leads from the two drives and it booted up from 'Drive B' so we swapped them back and it booted from 'Drive A', problem solved, it was probably a loose connection. Saves sending it back anyway.

Further organisation of my ship set-up data means that I might be able to actually interpret it in a useful manner. It's all very well being able to set up these different ships, but the game will need to reference this data later, so it needs various pointers into all the tables to be able to get at the right information quickly.

One thing that has puzzled me, is that all the sprites disappear in the changeover from the title screen to the main game. I wanted this to happen anyway, but I didn't tell it to do that. I realised that this is because the sprite multiplexor clears out the sprite table ready for the next position, which don't arrive if it's busy setting up the screen – so what am I to do in the pause mode? All the sprites will disappear. Any offers?

Thursday 9th April

Took the bull by the horns and began work on the control mode. From a programming point of view this is the most complex one that I've done yet. It is arguably the most important part of the program, as it is the interface between the player and the game. It must therefore be very carefully tuned up to allow the player as much freedom as possible, to make his or her own mistakes and not be able to blame the game afterwards!

It took a while to actually get the thing started as I'll be using the fire button to move from one section of the ship to another, but I was also using this to return to the monitor so every time I tried to move on the screen it returned to that. A quick alteration put that right, but the flashing blue square representing the current position refused to move. This was because it thought it was in two different places at the same time. Realising my error I fixed the initial start position routine that always locates the engine room. I began by moving at rocket speed. Moving one character position every cycle is too fast. I gave it a delay of three cycles in any square but controllable movement. Having rigged the hold down fire-button to disengage from a particular system and put in the movement, I needed the routine to re-engage into another system and identify it so that the proper things occur when using it. It's no good sitting in the landing bay being able to fire rockets. That's where I needed to access into the ship setup table.

Got that system up and running too, and implemented my first use of my JUMPY macro, the wonderful GOTO DEPENDING ON.

Friday 10th April

Got to thinking today that I may move the ship a few characters to the left so that the primary play area is on the right-hand side of the screen. This will have the effect that the ship will actually touch the docking bay structure, which can't be a bad thing. Maybe I'll try it. I'm also planning the title sequence and considering the possibilities of a demo mode, but I've never been to fond of them. It's quite hard to demonstrate a fairly complex control mode well.

ST has been finishing work on the new sound routine for the C64. He's upgrading it for more complex sounds and music. He did try to explain some of the new ways of producing sound effects to me but it's really hard to relate a bunch of numbers to a sound effect. You just have to experiment with it. I won't be putting the sound module in until the last few weeks, so maybe ST will send me on an IBM sound effects course in Florida!

To Be Continued . . .

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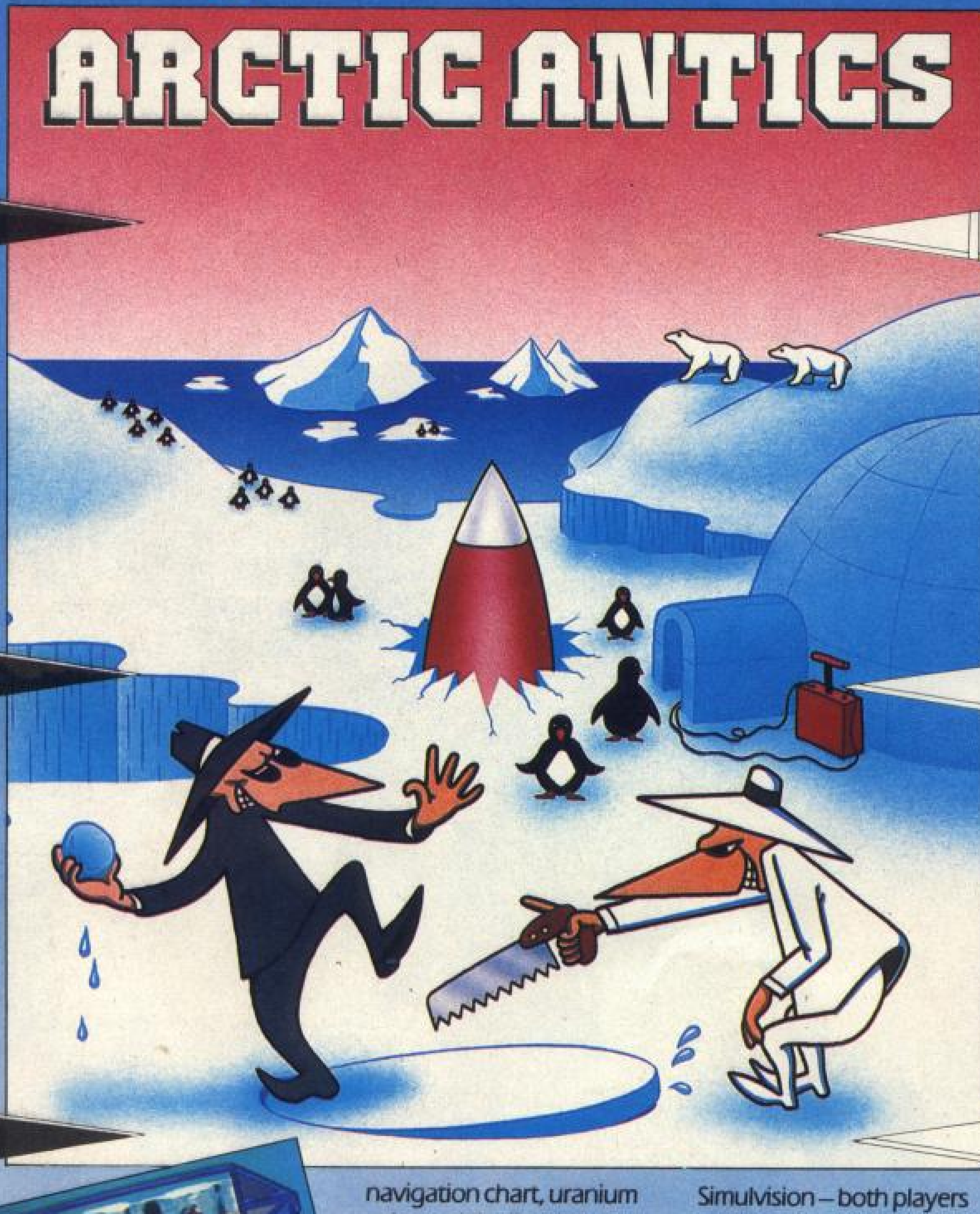
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THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE UGLY

Julian's fancy has turned to love, and instead of taking a cold shower he logs on in an attempt to calm down . . .

It's nice to see the 'net bursting into life with a positive plethora of demos, pictures and all sorts. After a few months of relative inactivity and not a lot of innovation, death and gloom merchants have had a chance to preach of the halcyon days of last year when it seemed hundreds of outstanding demos were uploaded every night. Well, we're not about to be plunged into a thousand years of dark, demoless misery and here's the evidence . . .

Take a look at WOBBLY SHARKS and WOBBLY PULGER, two exceptionally good pictures from Pixel Productions. Not only are they pretty to look at, they 'rippie' very convincingly (as well as play the tunes from Ocean's *Mutants*). Well worth a trudge through the DEMO DIR to find them (I can't tell you exactly where they are because Steve has eaten half my notes).

A cracking good demo which never fails to impress is MAN ON THE MOON by Dirty Den of the Eastenders Cracking Group. A really fabulous Commodore rendition of the classic Astronaut photograph taken by Neil Armstrong in 1969, complete with stirring Rob Hubbard tune. GOTO 206428 and DNLD as soon as possible.

The Judges are out and about twice this month with a duo of demos, both of which can be found at 2046428. TOUCH ME is a good laugh and not only has all six teasin' an' revealin' pictures from Martech's *Sam Fox Strip Poker*, but also has a romping version of the tasty dolly bird's raunchy top pop hit, **Touch Me**. The other demo is called RASCAL – a highly amusing cartoon picture with the brilliant *Miami Vice* music *and* a flip-over scrolling message. Both are definitely worth the DNLDing time.

In the same DIR is 1001's MOVIE II, a full screen scrolling message of greetings and verbal beatings accompanied by music from the USA/DUTCH team. Worth look, just to read what's going on in the world and who's stealing who's routines. By the way, a thanks very much to the USA/DUTCH team who sent their demo disk to ZZAP! It contains several incredible tunes, using four channels, sampled drums and speech to produce some amazing effects. Whether or not they will be UPLDed onto the net is another thing, but keep an ear out – the SID chip could well be on the brink of a new era.

Plasma Graphics have three very worthy demos in their DIR at 229296. CAN CAN is famously ghastly – a travesty of a demo with the most awful of tunes. An essential DNLD if you happen to be on the 'net. SKOOLDITZ is a very competent picture based on the cover of the 1984 book, and DH LAWRENCE is a very amusing demo featuring the great poet himself and three tunes, including the Wombles music and 'On Ilkley Moor Bhat 'at'. Well worth looking – and laughing – at (or with).

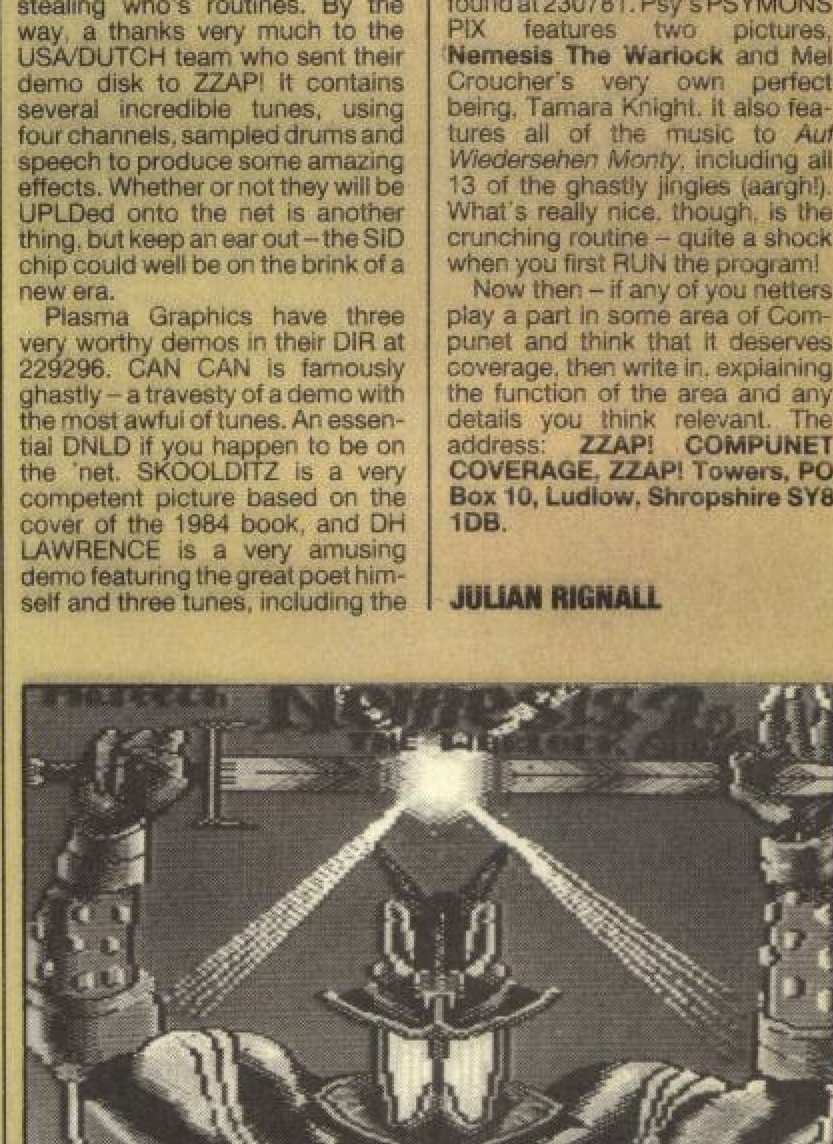
Another neat demo can be found at 230781. Psy's PSYMONS PIX features two pictures, **Nemesis The Warlock** and Mel Croucher's very own perfect being, Tamara Knight. It also features all of the music to *Auf Wiedersehen Monty*, including all 13 of the ghastly jingles (aargh!). What's really nice, though, is the crunching routine – quite a shock when you first RUN the program!

Now then – if any of you netters play a part in some area of Compunet and think that it deserves coverage, then write in, explaining the function of the area and any details you think relevant. The address: **ZZAP! COMPUNET COVERAGE, ZZAP! Towers, PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1DB.**

JULIAN RIGNALL



SKOOLDITZ – a binary interpretation of the new 1984 cover



One of PSYMON'S PIX – Nemesis The Warlock

MAN ON THE MOON – picture by LAMY, music by ROB HUBBARD and coding by DIRTY DEN



D H LAWRENCE has something interesting to tell you . . .



ZZAP! BACK

It's time to delve back into the depths of history – 17 months ago to be precise. The items under scrutiny are ZZAP! issues Nine and Ten – the January and February issues of 1986. Julian Rignall and Gary Penn take a look at the games reviewed and decide retrospectively whether the ratings were fair or not.

GAMES ZZAPBACKED

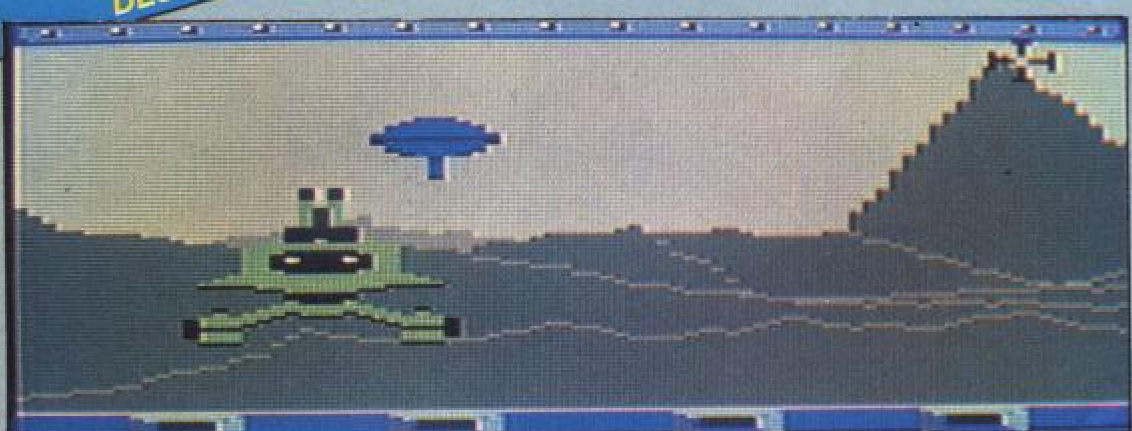
- KORONIS RIFT
- BALLBLAZER
- ROBIN OF THE WOOD
- FIGHT NIGHT
- BOUNDER
- THE EIDOLON
- REVS
- DESERT FOX

KORONIS RIFT
Activision/Lucasfilm

Following on from the much-admired Rescue On Fractalus came Koronis Rift, a program which uses fractal mathematics to produce stunning first person 3D effects. The objective is to explore the planet of Koronis Rift, an ancient weapons testing ground, and loot the giant war machines which now lie abandoned. The team found it an exhilarating experience and were much impressed by its flexibility. "This has to rate as one of the releases of the year" enthused Mr Liddon, while Julian went one better, saying: "this is definitely one of the all-time classics." Gary Penn thought "the whole product oozes with professionalism."

Superbly presented and polished to a 'T' – a trademark typical of Lucasfilm. What appealed to me most about Koronis was the complete and utter freedom within the program's environment, and the total feeling of 'being there'.
JR

No, I don't think it deserved a Gold Medal – the ratings were spot on at the time. It's a competent concept, but I've always felt that it wasn't quite used to the full.
GP



Presentation 93%

Graphics 96%

Sound 72%

Hookability 90%

Lastability 96%

Value For Money 94%

Overall 96%

(Jaz) At the time I thought that this too deserved a Gold Medal, and still do. PRESENTATION should be up by a couple of marks and OVERALL up to 97% – it's a very classy product which hasn't aged at all.

(Gaz) The cassette multi-load brings the PRESENTATION down by at least ten percent. GRAPHICS and SOUND down by ten percent apiece, HOOKABILITY and LASTABILITY down to low eighties, and VALUE and OVERALL down by ten percent.

BALLBLAZER
Activision/Lucasfilm

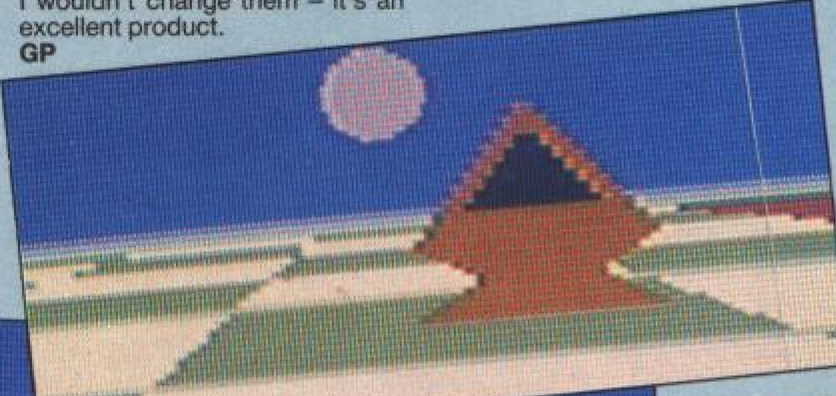
The Gold Medal award for January went to the second Activision/Lucasfilm release of the month – *Ballblazer*, a simple but incredibly playable one-on-one futuresport simulation. A horizontally split screen is used to display the action from each player's viewpoint as both battle to outscore one another. "This is definitely one of **THE** games of the year" exclaimed Liddon, echoing his opinions of *Koronis Rift* . . . Penn agreed heartily, "without doubt the release of the year" and Rignall was happy to offer his sentiments: "it's funny how the simple games usually turn out to be the best."

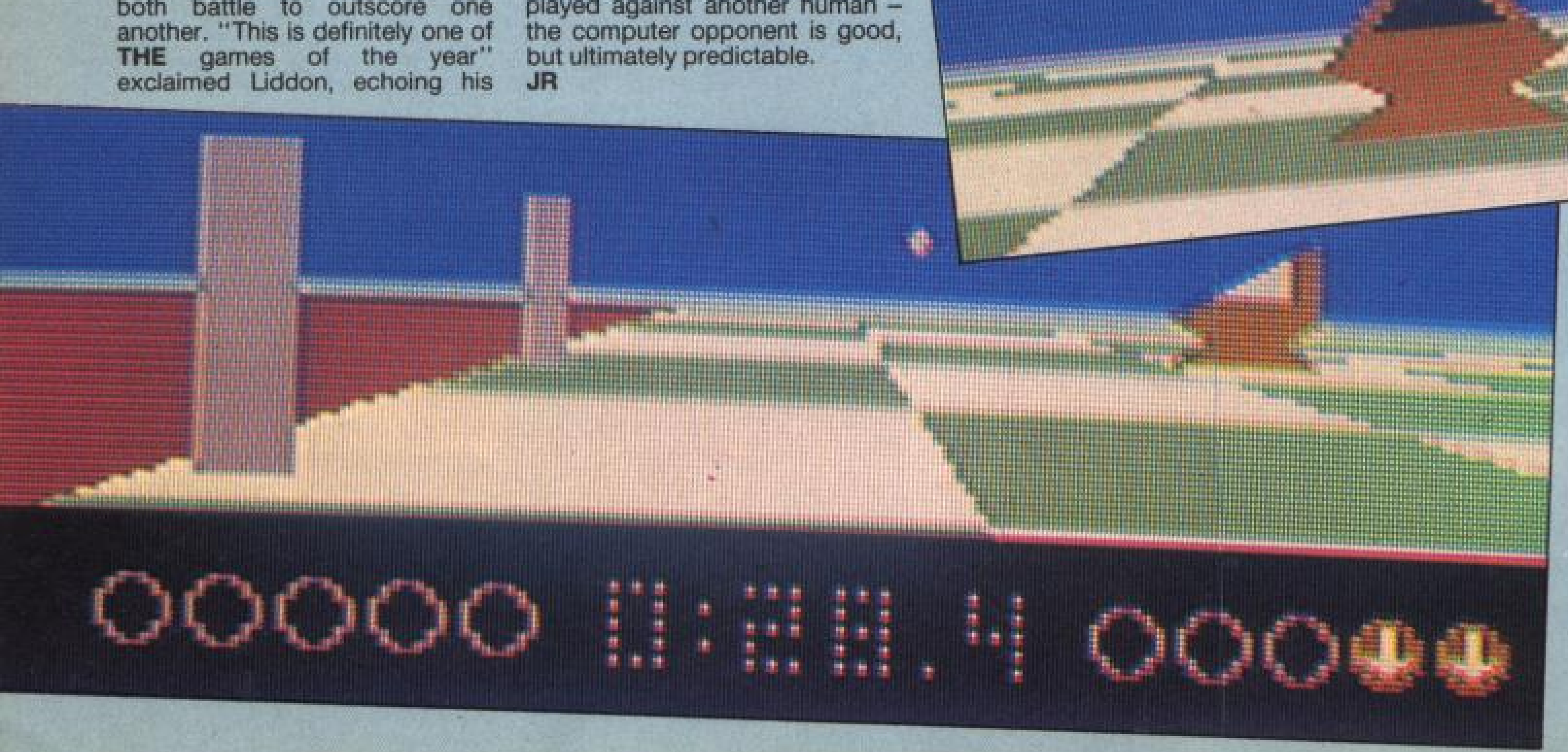
A brilliant concept perfectly executed. Ballblazer is THE one-on-one computer sports simulation. It really comes into its own when played against another human – the computer opponent is good, but ultimately predictable.
JR

This is a timeless classic – a game you can load any time and enjoy, more so when playing against a human opponent. I suppose the ratings did look a little extreme, but I wouldn't change them – it's an excellent product.
GP

(Jaz) The ratings are fine. It has become a legend in its own time.

(Gaz) I couldn't agree more.





Presentation 97%
Slick in all aspects

Graphics 95%
Fast, smooth and glitch free split screen display.

Sound 78%
Great auto improvised music but unfortunately weak FX.

Hookability 98%
Instant high speed addiction.

Lastability 98%
Compulsive sports action whether you play against computer or human opponents.

Value For Money 97%
A down to Earth price for such an out of this world game.

Overall 98%
The best sports simulation to hit the 64 yet.

ROBIN OF THE WOOD
Odin

This very pretty *Sabre Wulf*-style arcade adventure seduced our team, who spent many a happy hour cavorting around Sherwood Forest in search of rich people to rob and poor people to help. "*Robin of the Wood* is a real classic" (as opposed to a phoney one we assume) said Julian, while Gary Penn described it as "very pleasant and compulsive." Gary Liddon sealed its Sizzler status and gushed, "an excellent game and worthy of attention."

This is an extremely pleasant arcade adventure and I really enjoyed romping around the wood. The graphics and sound are tremendous and complement each other perfectly.
JR

It still looks fairly attractive, but the gameplay seems tired, what with so many games of this ilk being released over the past year and a half. Still, this is one of Odin's better releases – it's such a shame that their recent efforts haven't been as interesting.
GP

(Jaz) LASTABILITY down by about ten percent – once solved the program loses is appeal somewhat, and OVERALL and VALUE down by about three percent each.

(Gaz) GRAPHICS down by ten percent, SOUND down to low seventies, HOOKABILITY and LASTABILITY down by fifteen percent, and VALUE and OVERALL down to high seventies. It's still a good buy.



Presentation 90%
A goodly number of options and many pleasant touches

Graphics 95%
Some superb backdrops and excellently drawn and animated sprites

Sound 80%
Bouncy, driving and atmospheric mediaeval tunes

Hookability 93%
Plenty to explore, map and get into ...

Lastability 90%
... and a large wood to get out of!

Value For Money 90%
Worth its quota of groats

Overall 92%
An excellent arcade adventure



FIGHT NIGHT
US Gold

This much-touted cartoon-like boxing simulation allows you to build and train your own boxers and pit them against five whacky computer-controlled pugilists. Gary L went into poetry mode when he recited, "*Fight Night* is the best, forget the rest." Julian was slightly more reserved, but still enthusiastic and commented "an excellent product which shouldn't be missed." "Good to play and fun to watch, combining natural laws with those of the animated cartoon strip" said Gary P somewhat ambiguously.

Beautifully presented with some tremendous graphics – the boxers are very cartoon-like, beautifully animated with some very humorous touches. It's a shame that you couldn't pit two built boxers together – the novelty wore a little thin after meeting all five computer boxers.
JR

Unlike Activision's *Barry McGuigan's Boxing*, this hasn't stood the test of time particularly well. The humour soon wears thin, and the boxer construction set doesn't compensate for the lack of moves. It's still mildly entertaining, but not in the same league as Activision's boxing simulation.
GP

(Jaz) Both LASTABILITY and SOUND down by about ten percent. The rest of the ratings are fine – it's still one of the best (and definitely the funniest) fighting games around.

(Gaz) PRESENTATION down to low eighties, mainly because of the cassette multi-load. SOUND down to low fifties, HOOKABILITY down to mid-seventies, LASTABILITY down to low seventies, VALUE and OVERALL down to mid-seventies.



Presentation 96%

Graphics 94%

Sound 63%

Hookability 94%

Lastability 97%

Value For Money 91%

Overall 93%

BOUNDER
Gremlin Graphics

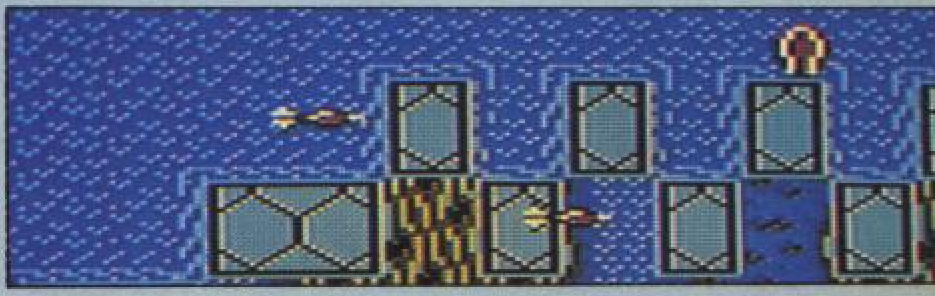
Bounder is one of the most difficult games to describe. It's a sort of vertically scrolling platform game which has you bouncing a tennis ball along a network of platforms high above the atmosphere . . . The best way to appreciate it is by playing, and play the ZZAP! team did. Julian waved both thumbs aloft and cried gleefully, "each one should come with a government health warning." "*Bounder* is one of the games of the New Year" said Liddon unimaginatively, while Penn went so far as to say "one of the most addictive games I have ever played," a quote which was later used on the packaging, much to the annoyance of a certain 'rival' magazine.

The only problem with this is that it's too difficult – later levels are seem almost impossible to negotiate. Nevertheless, that didn't stop me from enjoying the program immensely.
JR

It is tough, but highly addictive – I found it difficult to tear myself away. The approach is unique, but there's room for improvement, and I'm surprised that not one clone has yet appeared. I just hope Gremlin significantly expand on the original when they write *Bounder II*.
GP

(Jaz) Perhaps SOUND and LASTABILITY were a little OTT, but otherwise the program was fine – especially with a free copy of *Metabolis* on the back.

(Gaz) SOUND was overrated a touch – it should be nearer the low eighties. GRAPHICS down to mid-seventies, HOOKABILITY down a couple of percent, LASTABILITY down to high eighties/low nineties, and VALUE and OVERALL down to high eighties. It's aged, but not greatly.



Presentation 91%

Graphics 95%

Sound 90%

Hookability 98%

Lastability 97%

Value for Money 98%

Overall 97%



ZZAP! BACK



THE EIDOLON
Activision/Lucasfilm

Another Lucasfilm 3D fractal exploration game – this time putting you into the seat of a strange victorian machine that lets you travel into the depths of your own mind, and discover the horrors within. "Yet another classic game from Lucasfilm" postulated Penn, an obvious fan. "Superb graphics resulting in fantastic realism as you penetrate the mysterious caverns" ranted Rignall, another convert. "There's no criticism I can think of for this game" lectured Liddon. However, many readers disagreed with the team's judgement and arguments raged for months . . .

Another super-slick fractal program with a fabulous atmosphere. The graphics are nothing short of stunning, and the game plays like a classic film.
JR

Sadly, *The Eidolon* failed to make a significant impact. I suppose it was due to the fact that it doesn't look particularly enthralling – but it is. The atmosphere and feeling of 'being there' is uncanny – it still hasn't been surpassed, and more than makes up for the lack of variety. A true classic, which hasn't dated since its release.
GP

Presentation 96%

Graphics 98%

Sound 86%

Hookability 96%

Lastability 97%

Value For Money 95%

Overall 97%



(Jaz) With the exception of the slightly underrated presentation mark, the ratings are perfect. *The Eidolon* is an animated adventure in the true sense of the word. It's a shame that a lot of you didn't agree with us . . .

(Gaz) Agreed, PRESENTATION should have been higher – and all of the ratings stand true now.



REVS
Firebird

This is Geoff Crammond's first game for the 64, the second being *The Sentinel*. It's a realistic racing car simulation in the true sense of the word, and is consequently very difficult to play. However, the team persevered and after a lot of practice could just about drive around Silverstone and Brands Hatch without writing the car off! "Truly a fabulous program – every driver's dream" said Julian, who was often found "taking a spin" when he should have been writing reviews. "Revs had me on the edge of my seat" spouted Gary Liddon, and Gary Penn ejaculated, "there are race games and there are simulations, but there's nothing quite like *Revs*." Stirring stuff indeed.

I remember sitting at the Commodore for hours trying to get around the course without crashing. It's a truly brilliant racing simulation which combines brilliant graphics with outstanding depth. Terribly expensive at £15, but worth every penny.
JR

Presentation 98%

Graphics 94%

Sound 49%

Hookability 90%

Lastability 97%

Value For Money 89%

Overall 96%

I think we underrated *Revs* at the time – it's a wonderful simulation and should have been awarded a Gold Medal, regardless of the fact that there is no digital joystick option. It feels so exhilarating, and using the keyboard doesn't affect the playability in the slightest. I can't wait for *Revs Plus* – it should be better still.
GP

(Jaz) Maybe the graphics rating should have been up a touch and the HOOKABILITY down slightly – it's very difficult to 'drive', but well worth persevering with.

(Gaz) Apart from OVERALL, which should have been 97%, the ratings were fine. However, if we reviewed it now I would rate it slightly lower – a single percentage tweak here and there.

DESERT FOX
US Gold

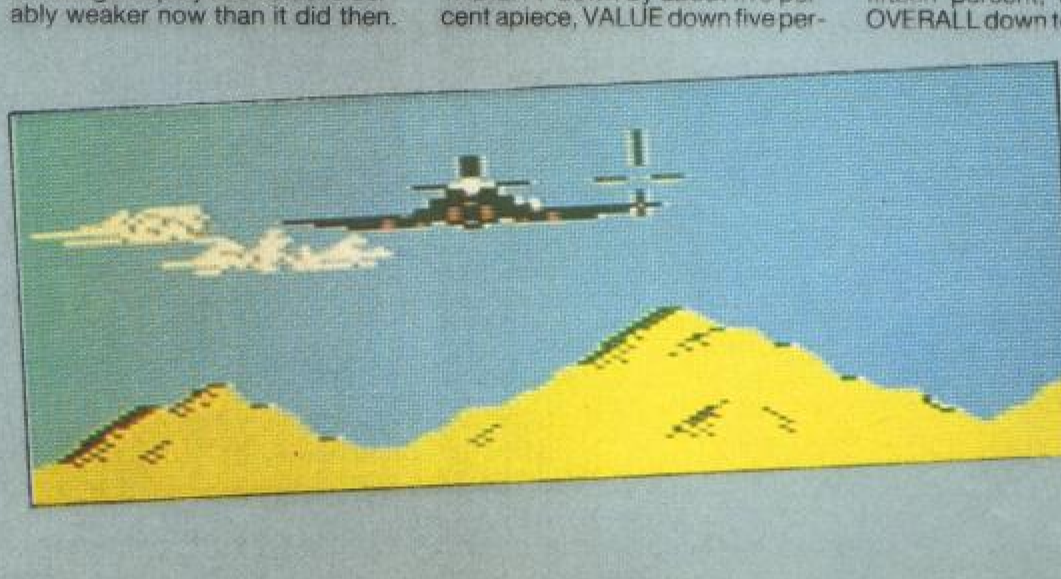
Especially designed for budding tank commanders, *Desert Fox* puts the player into the driving seat of a World War II tank. There are six different scenarios in which Rommel's forces have to be defeated. Great graphics and crystal clear digitised speech further enhance the program. "I had a really good time on this one" said Sean Masterson our ex-strategy columnist. Julian similarly admitted, "I really liked playing this" while Gary was happy to describe it as "an unusual and very competent blend of strategy and arcade action."

I said then, and still think now that this is a glorified Battlezone, *but it's great nevertheless. The graphics and sound work together extremely well, and the product is very slick and highly polished.*
JR

No, I would consider *Desert Fox* to be more of a glorified *Beach Head* – improved in every aspect. The graphics and speech work well, but the gameplay seems considerably weaker now than it did then. Still, if you can pick it up at a budget price, I recommend you do so.
GP

(Jaz) GRAPHICS down a couple of percent, HOOKABILITY and LASTABILITY down by about five percent apiece, VALUE down five percent and OVERALL by two percent.

(Gaz) PRESENTATION, GRAPHICS and SOUND are as good now as they were then, but I would rate the HOOKABILITY and LASTABILITY lower by about fifteen percent, and VALUE and OVERALL down to mid-seventies.



Presentation 90%

Graphics 82%

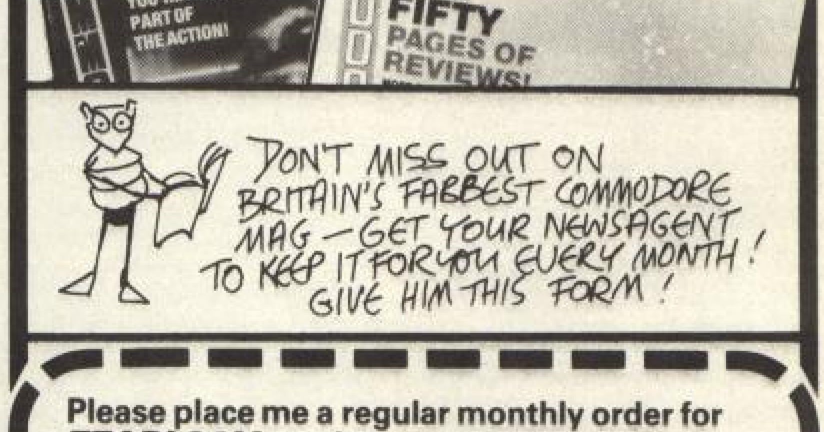
Sound 95%

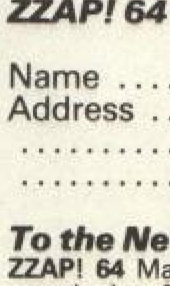
Hookability 86%

Lastability 87%

Value For Money 85%

Overall 87%





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104,340 Scott Moore, Fixby, Huddersfield
70,480 Garry Smith, Dershingham, Norfolk
38,990 Graham Jones, Westbury, Somerset

SLAMBALL (Americana)
5,768,870 Carelton Shaw, London, N10
4,684,710 Martin Dalton, Rochester, Kent
4,593,910 Ian George, Cambridge

SPACE HARRIER (Elite)
6,976,540 Dave Smith, Exeter, Devon
3,177,500 Casey Gallacher, Calcot, Reading
2,567,400 Colin McGlashan, Perth, Scotland

SPLIT PERSONALITIES (Domark)
680,400 Mrs L Hayden, London E16
505,100 Michael Skelcher, Wentoning, Beds
404,700 Rob Brown, Portobello, Edinburgh

STAR GLIDER (Rainbird)
46,325 Damian Ward, Harrogate, W Yorks
21,525 Gary Penn, ZZAP! Towers

STARQUAKE (Bubble Bus)
287,763 Nigel Froud, Godalming, Surrey
287,140 Ove Knudseu, 5033 Fyllingsdaleu, Norway
273,667 Per Kjellander, Stenungsund, Sweden

STREET SURFER (Bubble Bus)
15,728 Ian Morse, Bedfont, Middx
12,900 Nick Holding, Stevenage, Herts

SUPER CYCLE (Epyx/US Gold)
700, 400 Declan Quinn, Bessbrook, Newry Co Down
320,160 A Verhaeghe, Bletchley, Bucks
269,310 Andy Girvan, Corby, Northants

TAU CETI (CRL)
21,055 Andrew Tarski, Dursley, Glos
20,465 Robert Elliot, Middlesbrough, Cleveland
20,440 Shaun Russell, Shildon, Co Durham

TENTH FRAME (US Gold)
Amateur
268 Vincent Cox, Wellingborough, N Hants
266 Graeme Dutch, Tillydrone, Aberdeen
244 Robin Evans, Tring, Herts

Professional
214 Graeme Dutch, Tillydrone, Aberdeen
170 G McKenzie, Dunbar, East Lothian
132 Mick Wall, Hillsborough, Sheffield

TERRA CRESTA (Imagine)
371,800 Robert Hemphill, Port Glasgow, Renfrewshire
341,000 Marc Hodge, Selby, N Yorks
285,500 Andrew Braybrook, Witham, Essex

THAI BOXING (Anco)
17,020 Dave Smith, Exeter, Devon

THRUST (Firebird)
3,500,800 Declan Quinn, Bessbrook, Newry Co Down
2,108,800 William Rodgers, Bessbrook, Newry Co Down
1,563,250 Robert Troughton, Cowling, Keighley

TOY BIZARRE (Activision)
223,420 J D Oliver, Ipswich, Suffolk
144,700 Sherif Salama, Cairo, Egypt
102,900 Julian Rignall, ZZAP! Towers

TRAILBLAZER (Gremlin Graphics)
1,123,350 Jason Cooper, Wednesbury, W Mids
1,120,040 Henry Rawlinson, Salisbury, Wilts
828,270 Ian Robinson, Tottenham, London

TRAP (Alligata)
481,900 Lawry Simm, Liverpool L23
429,510 Colin Bayne, Glenrothes, Fife
328,500 Robert Elliot, Middlesborough, Cleveland

UCHI MATA (Martech)
378,760 Mark Sexton, Lancing, W Sussex
353,795 Nicholas Lester, Dudley, W Mids
318,100 Steven Harris, Walton-on-Naze, Essex

URIDIUM (Hewson)
22,906,385 CN, SP, MD, JK, Marston Green, Birmingham
3,820,020 David Horsburgh, Uddington, Glasgow
3,428,985 Andrew Mackay, Liverpool 18

URIDIUM PLUS (Hewson)
197,925 Russell Wallace, Co Dublin, Ireland
167,000 Damian Boocock, Colne, Lancs
154,600 Jamie Paton, Downfield, Dundee

V (Ocean)
28,600 Peter Williams, Preston, Lancs
24,600 D A Ashcroft, Wirral, Cheshire
21,200 Danny Pratt, Southampton

WARHAWK (Firebird)
3,172,288 Peter Hunt, Hook, Hants
1,701,568 Jake E, Hill Top, West Brom
1,484,200 Michael Shanks, Norwich, Norfolk

WAR (Martech)
426,144 Casey Gallacher, Calcot, Reading
270,782 Ricky Smith, Basingstoke, Hants
153,968 Steve Lee, Guildford, Surrey

WEST BANK (Gremlin Graphics)
131,600 James Lavelle, Copmanthorpe, York
115,530 Marc Hodge, Selby, N Yorks
37,710 M Svendsen, 6000 Koldigg, Denmark

WIZARD'S LAIR (Bubble Bus)
152,735 Steven Medcraft, Rayleigh, Essex
127,935 Paul Peterson, Harlow, Essex
103,890 David Hedges, London E6

XEVIOUS (US Gold)
281,280 Jonathon Webb, Highbridge, Somerset
173,860 John McGruther, Bishopton, Scotland
145,710 Colin McGlashan, Perth, Scotland

YIE AR KUNG-FU (Imagine)
154,200 Andrew Manley, Bush Hill Park, Enfield
152,260,000 Scott Gracen, Whitley Bay, Tyne And Wear
127,900 Mick Wall, Hillsborough, Sheffield

YIE AR KUNG-FU II (Imagine)
288,300 Carl Adams, Tooting, London
134,400 Rene Groenewoud, Heerhugowaard, The Netherlands
99,500 Wayne Gunnell, London N5

Z (Rhino)
671,450 Jake E, Hill Top, West Brom
576,200 Stephen Ross, Ryde, Isle of Wight
366,600 K Fairbrother, Stapltord, Notts

ZONE RANGER (Firebird)
10,720 Julian Rignall, ZZAP! Towers
8190 Sherif Salama, Cairo, Egypt



LEVIATHAN MISSION



A tricky wordsquare was designed to sort out the men from the boys in this LEVIATHAN competition, run in conjunction with ENGLISH SOFTWARE. And sort you out it did! A copy of LEVIATHAN will soon be winging its way to each of these 50 lads . . .

Ricky Fenwick, Northumberland, NE62 5PL; Daniel Bramwell, Surrey, SM6 9QT; Ian Moss, South Humberside, DN17 2PA; Ian Robinson, London, N17 6XP; Peter Anzuino, Prestwick, KA9 2JW; D S Davis, Essex, RM18 7RP; Christian Pritchard, Cambs, PE19 3RP; Graeme Carlyle, Central Scotland, FK3 9JD; David Upchurch, Cambs, PE17 5BQ; Paul McAndrew, Fife, KY11 1PR; J A Charles, East Sussex, BN20 9NL; Jonathan Nicholls, Berkshire, SL5 8PG; Julian Parker, Berks, SL1 3UT; Stephen Parrish, Chatham, ME5 9JP; J Atkinson, North Yorkshire, BD24 0AN; Phil Jones, West Yorkshire, LS26 0EJ; Wayne Dibben, Essex, RM14 1LN; Philip Haynes, Derby, DE2 0HB; Shaun Hayhurst, Derbyshire, DE4 4AD; Michael Barker, Derby, DE3 4AA; Mr P R Tucker, Peterborough, PE4 6DS; Phil Cunnington, Bourne, Lincs, PE10 9DB; Robert Syrad, Dorset, BH18 9BU; John Randall, Bedfordshire, LU7 7QA; Paul Martin Bartley, Cleveland, TS1 4EA; Paul Partington, Dorset, BH21 6QE; John Smith, Liverpool, L12 8SB; Richard Parker, North Yorks, BD23 3ET; Barry Clark, Inverness, IV2 3UX; David Mecham, Essex, RM2 5TD; P Harthen, Cheshire, SK15 1JE; W Redman, Essex, IG11 7QW; James Dovey, Hertfordshire, WN3 2NZ; Steven Parsons, South Yorkshire, DN5 0PQ; Faccani Sandro, Lase, Italy 021QU, James Hill, Lincs, DN21 2JB; Paul Shaw, West Midlands, DY4 7PZ; Lee Chapman, Wiltshire, SP4 8LS; Patrick Oliver, Birmingham, B13 8RT; John Packham, Cleveland, TS26 8LE; David Woodcock, Surrey, GU9 9ED; David Covey, Essex, CM3 5YR; Marcus Fardoe, Shropshire, SY3 0AT; Nathan Barnett, North Yorks, HG2 8HT; John Pollard, Essex, CM8 1JD; K Desmond, Kent, DA5 3LN; R Morgan, London, E6 3PL; Neil Shepard, Marshalls Cross, WA9 4JS; Neil Forsyth, Oldham, OL8 2SR; Andrew Mitchell, Hampshire, SO5 3JW



DEATH OR GLORY

CRL's DEATH OR GLORY was the subject of this competition, in which entrants had to bulldoze their way through a spot the difference puzzle to be in with a chance of winning a huge model space craft. First out of the correct entries bag was **Michael J Cunningham** of Market Deeping PE6 8DU. Well done, Mike.

Peter Bridgeland of Essex RM11 2RH and **G M Kenny** from Lancashire PR7 5BH were next out of the sack and will be receiving smaller versions of the kits, while the following 50 runners-up each receive a copy of the game . . .

Steven Johnstone, Glasgow, G23 5PJ; Mrs H Sharp, Devon, EX31 4BG; Simon Leason, Staffs, ST14 7JN; Neil Jenkins, Mid-Glamorgan, CF33 4LW; Ryan Chapman, Cleveland, TS13 4DX; K Suman, Birmingham, B21 0EA; Mrs J R Gorton, Lancs, PR2 7AQ; J Rigbie, London, E6 3SF; John MacKillop, Warwickshire, CV 0AB; Stuart Brown, Cambs, PE17 3AG; Simon Gamage, Essex, CM3 5TP; Andrew Kelly, Dublin 4, Eire; John McGhee, Glasgow, G14 9YQ; Paul Rogers, Tyne and Wear, NE34 0PX; Darren Pauley, Devon, EX17 2EA; 24472227 L/SGT Jones K, Shackleton Barracks, BFPO 802; David Bellamy, Shropshire, WV15 5DF; Johnathan Shillito, West Yorkshire, BD20 9DT&; Paul Bidgway, Gwent, NP6 5LA; Tony David, Kent, ME10 3AD; Alan Coombes, Abergavenny, NP7 0BB; Jamie Hunter, North Yorkshire, DL8 2BQ; Andrew Mora, Oxon, OX9 5LH; Gary Sims, Essex, RM7 8BH; C W Tredgold, 2 LI, BFPO 24; C L Powell, Lancs, FY5 2HH; Matthew Hutchings, Cornwall, TR4 8JA; M A Knychala, Gwent, NP4 0BG; Ross Harris, South Glamorgan, CF6 2SL; Leon Spence, Stockport, SK2 6DD; Kelvin Edge, Staffs, WS11 2PP; David Richards, Lancs, OL9 6BE; Mr M A Wharton, Stoke-On-Trent, ST2 7LB; David Barnett, Berkshire, RG3 5YL; Brian Pitt, Leamington Spa, CV31 1PF; Steven Evans, West Midlands, B65 9JY; Mark Price, Swansea, SA3 2BS; Ian Holt, Derby, DE2 0HF; J Broadman, Lancs, WN7 1RU; Kevan Gelling, Birmingham, B42 1RR; Gary Partridge, Walsall, WS2 8TU; Robert Glass, Caithness, KW14 8YE; Jonathon Leggett, Berks, RG7 3EF; Mark Davies, Cheshire, CW6 0BX; A C Wood, South Yorks, S62 5BJ; Jack Manthorpe, East Sussex, TN22 3BG; Jonathan Madeley, Near Pontefract, WF7 6BS; Jonathan Wood, Cornwall, TR14 7XQ; Mr S K Jelley, Leicester, LE8 0TW; Pete Fan, Stockport, SK3 8HZ.

ZZAP! READERS' CH

GAMES TOP 30

1 *(1)* **WORLD GAMES** *(15%)*
US Gold/Epyx, £9.99 cass, £14.99 disk
ZZAP! Overall Rating: 98%

2 *(2)* **LEADER BOARD** *(9%)*
US Gold/Access, £9.95 cass, £14.95 disk
ZZAP! Overall Rating: 97%

3 *(3)* **GAUNTLET** *(9%)*
US Gold, £9.99 cass, £14.99 disk
ZZAP! Overall Rating: 93%

4 *(8)* **URIDIUM** *(5%)*
Hewson, £8.95 cass, £12.95 disk
ZZAP! Overall Rating: 94%

5 *(6)* **GREEN BERET** *(4%)*
Imagine, £8.95 cass
ZZAP! Overall Rating: 93%

6 *(5)* **SUPER CYCLE** *(4%)*
US Gold/Epyx, £9.99 cass, £14.99 disk
ZZAP! Overall Rating: 95%

7 *(4)* **GHOSTS 'N' GOBLINS** *(3%)*
Elite, £9.95 cass, £14.95 disk
ZZAP! Overall Rating: 97%

8 *(7)* **SANXION** *(3%)*
Thalamus, £9.95 cass, £14.95 disk
ZZAP! Overall Rating: 93%

9 *(-)* **DELTA** *(3%)*
Thalamus, £9.99 cass, £14.99 disk
ZZAP! Overall Rating: 74%

10 *(9)* **THE SENTINEL** *(2%)*
Firebird, £9.95 cass, £14.95 disk
ZZAP! Overall Rating: N/A

11 *(27)* **GUNSHIP**
Microprose, £14.99 cass, £19.99 disk
ZZAP! Overall Rating: 93%

12 *(12)* **PARALLAX**
Ocean, £8.95 cass
ZZAP! Overall Rating: 93%

13 *(16)* **INTERNATIONAL KARATE**
System 3, £6.50 cass, £10.99 disk
ZZAP! Overall Rating: 91%

14 *(-)* **NEMESIS**
Konami, £8.95 cass, £12.95 disk
ZZAP! Overall Rating: 80%

15 *(10)* **THE SACRED ARMOUR OF ANTIRIAD**
Palace Software, £8.95 cass
ZZAP! Overall Rating: 93%

16 *(23)* **PARK PATROL**
Firebird, £1.99 cass
ZZAP! Overall Rating: 94%

17 *(26)* **ESCAPE FROM SINGE'S CASTLE**
Software Projects, £9.95 cass, £14.95 disk
ZZAP! Overall Rating: 90%

18 *(29)* **180**
Mastertronic, £1.99 cass
ZZAP! Overall Rating: 70%

19 *(11)* **AVENGER**
Gremlin Graphics, £9.95 cass, £14.95 disk
ZZAP! Overall Rating: 86%

20 *(-)* **ARKANOID**
Imagine, £8.95 cass, £14.95 disk
ZZAP! Overall Rating: 80%

21 *(25)* **DRUID**
Firebird, £7.95 cass
ZZAP! Overall Rating: 88%

22 *(-)* **PAPERBOY**
Elite, £9.95 cass, £14.95 disk
ZZAP! Overall Rating: 44%

23 *(19)* **ELITE**
Firebird, £14.95 cass, £17.95 disk
ZZAP! Overall Rating: 95%

24 *(-)* **ALIENS**
Electric Dreams, £9.99 cass, £14.99 disk
ZZAP! Overall Rating: 81%

25 *(13)* **ALLEYKAT**
Hewson, £8.95 cass, £12.95 disk
ZZAP! Overall Rating: 89%

26 *(17)* **SUMMER GAMES II**
US Gold/Epyx, £9.95 cass, £14.95 disk
ZZAP! Overall Rating: 97%

27 *(15)* **INFILTRATOR**
US Gold, £9.99 cass, £14.99 disk
ZZAP! Overall Rating: 91%

28 *(20)* **MERCENARY**
Novagen, £9.95 cass, £12.95 disk
ZZAP! Overall Rating: 98%

29 *(28)* **CHAMPIONSHIP WRESTLING**
US Gold/Epyx, £9.99 cass, £14.99 disk
ZZAP! Overall Rating: 80%

30 *(25)* **MUTANTS**
Ocean, £8.95 cass
ZZAP! Overall Rating: 90%



HARTS

MUSIC TOP 10

JUNE 1987

1 *(1)* **SANXION** *(30%)*
Thalamus
Loading Music (Rob Hubbard)

2 *(2)* **KNUCKLEBUSTERS** *(10%)*
Melbourne House
Main Theme (Rob Hubbard)

3 *(9)* **GREEN BERET** *(10%)*
Imagine
Loading Music (Martin Galway)

4 *(6)* **THRUST** *(6%)*
Firebird
Firebird (Rob Hubbard)

5 *(5)* **GHOSTS 'N' GOBLINS** *(5%)*
Elite
Main Theme (Mark Cooksey)

6 *(-)* **DELTA** *(5%)*
Thalamus
Main Theme (Rob Hubbard)

7 *(8)* **FLASH GORDON** *(5%)*
Mastertronic
Title Screen Music (Rob Hubbard)

8 *(4)* **PARALLAX** *(5%)*
Ocean
Title Screen Music (Martin Galway)

9 *(-)* **ARKANOID** *(3%)*
Firebird
Main Theme (Rob Hubbard)

10 *(7)* **LIGHTFORCE** *(3%)*
FTL
Main Theme (Rob Hubbard)

CHART VOTING DRAW WINNERS

WINNER (£40 worth of software plus ZZAP! T-Shirt): **Glenn Chapman**, Telford TF3 2BJ

RUNNERS UP (ZZAP! T-Shirt and Cap): **Roger Wright**, Brentwood CM15 0RB; **Mark Riley**, Runcorn WA7 6NT; **Gareth Jones**, Gwynedd LL55 2RG; **A J Binns**, Codsall WV8 2AG



ZZAP! 64
CHART VOTING COUPON

(Please write in BLOCK CAPITALS)

Name ....
Address ....
....
....
Postcode ....

If I win the £40 worth of software I would like the following games:
(Game and Software House)

T-Shirt Size S/M/L

I am voting for the following five games:

1 ....
2 ....
3 ....
4 ....
5 ....

I am also voting for the following piece of music:
(Commodore 64 ONLY)

....

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FIREBIRD

RIVER RAID

Firebird, £1.99 cass, joystick only

As the best pilot in the air force you've been volunteered for the most mega-important mission ever. Now, backed up by a fleet of four planes, you're ready to penetrate deep behind well-defended enemy lines.

The objective is to fly up a large vertically scrolling river, taking out the bridges which are encountered at regular intervals. Points are awarded for destroying a bridge and for achieving the secondary task of destroying as many military targets as possible.



This must be the oldest vertical scroller on the Commodore, but it still manages to knock the pants off new stuff like Xevious, Aftermath **and** Terra Cognita. **The graphics give an initial air of simplicity, but the scrolling is dead smooth and the action is fast and furious. On later levels things get pretty hairy, what with the density of the traffic jam increasing as the width of the river decreases. Having to stay on the river adds a little twist to the gameplay, and keeping and eye on the fuel keeps the adrenalin pumping. Definitely the best budget shoot 'em up around.**



Yeah, this is what I want! I remember playing this on an old Atari and it's still got that same mindless appeal that it had then. The graphics are coarse and the sound grates, but it still has the stuff classics are made of – playability and the urge to return for 'just one more game.' River Raid **may look dated, but it plays considerably better than most recent release – so go grab your two quid, buy this and get playing.**

The plane has to keep a course directly over the water, as straying onto the bank results in its destruction. As the mission progresses the river becomes increasingly congested with helicopters, ships and balloons, shuttling back and forth across the raging torrent. Contact with enemy aircraft is fatal, so dodging or blasting is absolutely necessary. On later levels aeroplanes fly across the river at high speed and tanks fire explosive charges from safe positions on the bank.

The plane's fuel supply is represented as a diminishing bar, with supplies replenished by flying over the striped rectangular fuel depots marked 'fuel' – the slower the plane flies the more fuel is collected. A complete lack of fuel results in the loss of a plane.



▲ That cloud of dust used to be a battleship, until your jet took it out . . .



This ageing and simplistic shoot 'em up may still offer a decent blast for fans of the genre, but I didn't find it particularly enthralling. The screens get progressively tougher but do not alter graphically, which makes things a little repetitive. Although looking a little dated now, River Raid **is certainly no disaster – but your budget collection won't suffer by its absence.**

As the mission continues the river becomes increasingly thinner, more congested with enemy vehicles and fuel depots become scarcer. Well, nobody told you that it was going to be easy . . .



▼ Happiness is . . . a full fuel tank and plenty of things to blow to pieces!



PRESENTATION 87%
A one or two player option, pause mode, restart and four separate entry levels.

GRAPHICS 42%
Very simple, but the scrolling and sprite movement is very smooth.

SOUND 29%
A few simple but suitable spot effects.

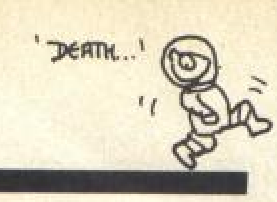
HOOKABILITY 78%
Instantly enjoyable pick-up-and-play shoot 'em up action.

LASTABILITY 54%
Eventually palls due to lack of variety.

VALUE 81%
Sensibly priced for a couple of weeks entertainment.

OVERALL 70%
Suitable fodder for the shoot 'em up fan, providing a simple, but very enjoyable blast.





DEATH OR GLORY

CRL, £9.95 cass, joystick or keys

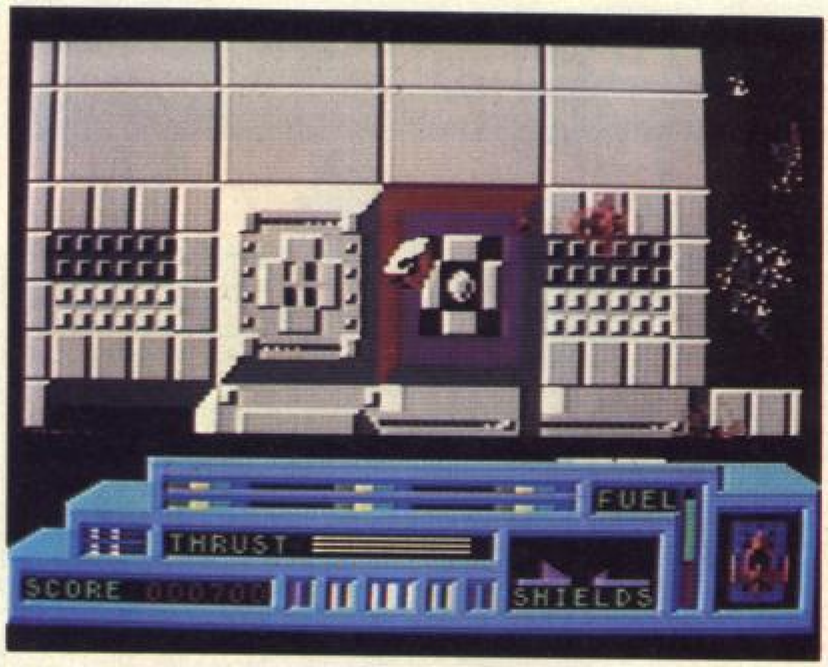
It's a funny old universe isn't it. One moment you're an average spacedozer driver, destroying empty space stations for a living. The next you're single-handedly taking on an enormous alien invasion fleet . . .

You've been told to investigate a unidentified speck on the very limits of the civil space radar screen. It's generally thought to be some sort of large asteroid – however, on your approach to the object it becomes apparent that it's nothing as ordinary as a hunk of space rock. The radar blip becomes bigger and bigger, until suddenly you realise that it's an alien invasion force, consisting of battlecruisers and nimble android fighters. And it's heading directly towards the peaceful planet of New Stratford! There isn't enough time to turn back and alert New Stratford's defence system – the fleet has to be dispatched here and now.

The multi-directional scrolling action is viewed from above, with the spacedozer occupying a central position and flying at speed above the invasion fleet. Pressing the fire button dips the reinforced nose and sends it ripping through the outer shell of the cruiser – destroying it if the dozer is travelling at top speed. A slower speed only results in partial destruction.

Alien fighters attack throughout the demolition. Contact with either an alien ship or bomb weakens the dozers' collision armour, represented by a diminishing bar at the bottom of the screen. Allow the bar to reach zero and the dozer explodes, resulting in the end of the planet-saving mission.

When enough battleships are wrecked, the dozer is promoted to another, more difficult level where another fleet awaits demolition.



▲ Hovering around the red fuel cells soon replenishes your shields – if you don't get blown up first!



Death Or Glory's backdrop **doesn't look too bad . . . but then the screen starts scrolling – smoothness is obviously not one of CRL's priorities. Even if you manage to ignore the jerky scrolling there's very little to get excited about. The gameplay is quite limited, offering a bit of initial fun, but becoming increasingly boring on each successive play. It looks and plays like a budget title, and its ten pound price tag is therefore ridiculous.**

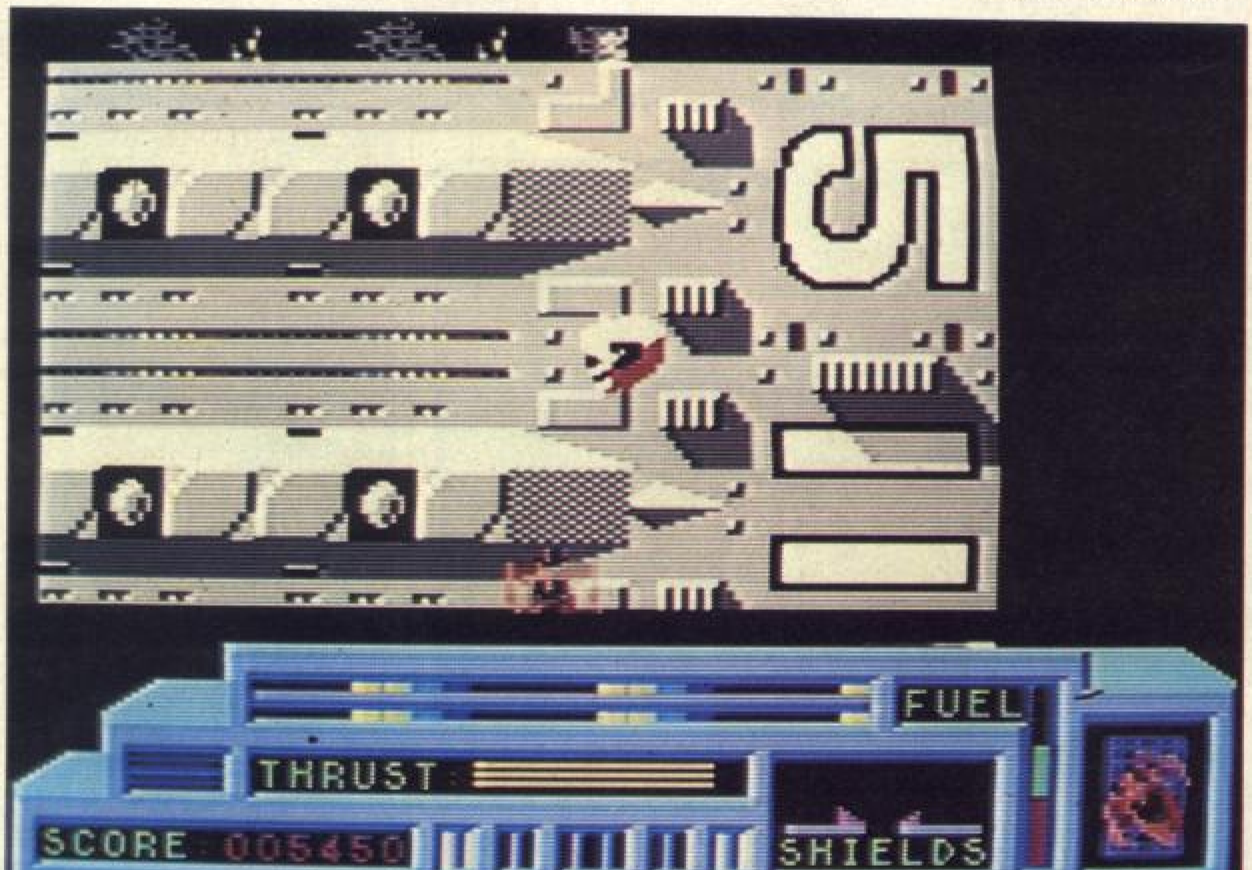


Although graphically pleasing, Death Or Glory **is immensely dull to play. Dozing through ship after ship (in the sleepy sense of the word) is not my idea of a good time. This task is made all the more wearisome by the awkward control method and the somewhat illogical progression from screen to screen – sometimes you are transported almost immediately, and for no apparent reason. The lack of instructions don't help either. Not a terribly awe-inspiring release I'm afraid.**



Death Or Glory **is like a shoot 'em up without the shooting (if you can imagine that), and it soon becomes tiresome. Simply flying around, ripping up the scenery is tedious beyond belief, and it's annoying to feel so defenceless. The graphics and animation are inconsistent; the stars don't move during flight, but some of the bas-relief backdrops are gorgeous and it seems such a waste to destroy them.** Death Or Glory **had potential, I'll say that. It's sad that CRL didn't realise this when they started programming it.**

▼ Battlecruiser number five is about to get the spacedozer treatment



PRESENTATION 74%
No instructions, but generally well laid out.

GRAPHICS 61%
The effect of the neat bas-relief backdrops is ruined due to the jerky scrolling.

SOUND 57%
A reasonable tune plays throughout, and there are some suitable spot effects.

HOOKABILITY 56%
Simplistic and instantly appealing but uninteresting gameplay.

LASTABILITY 33%
Repetitive and unrewarding.

VALUE 29%
Not enough variety or action to justify the price.

OVERALL 37%
A barely average attempt at producing a new form of destructive game.



Disaster looms for the bowler and brolly brigade. The contemptible COUNT CHAMELEON, Master of Disguise and sworn enemy of the establishment, is determined to succeed in his latest and greatest dastardly plot. His sale of rubber goods through mail-order ads in a civil service magazine, has led him to develop the RUBBERTRONIC RAY. With it he threatens to neutralise the starch in wing-collars, loosen stiff upper lips and generally relax moral standards – leading to the collapse of The Empire. Worse still, it will radically and unpredictably alter the bounce of a cricket ball. This bounder must be stopped!

AVAILABLE FOR COMMODORE 64/128



Available from all good computer game stockists, or by mail order from: Palace Software, 275 Pentonville Road, London N1 9NL.

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BIG TROUBLE IN LITTLE CHINA

Electric Dreams, £9.99 cass, £14.99 disk, joystick or keys

San Francisco consists of two different worlds: the normal everyday America city, and the strange twilight world of little China – a mystical and mysterious environment.

It is in this eerie world that the ancient Mandarin War Lord, Lo Pan, attempts to gain his immortality . . . and when that is achieved he will use his magical powers to gain control of the world.

Marrying and sacrificing a green-eyed girl will appease the demonic powers that deny Lo Pan his longevity, and Jack Burton's girlfriend, Gracie Law, just happens to have green eyes, as does Miao Yin, Wang Chi's fiancé. Consequently, both women have been captured, leaving Jack, Wang and their mystic friend, Egg Shen, to head boldly into Lo Pan's den to track them down.

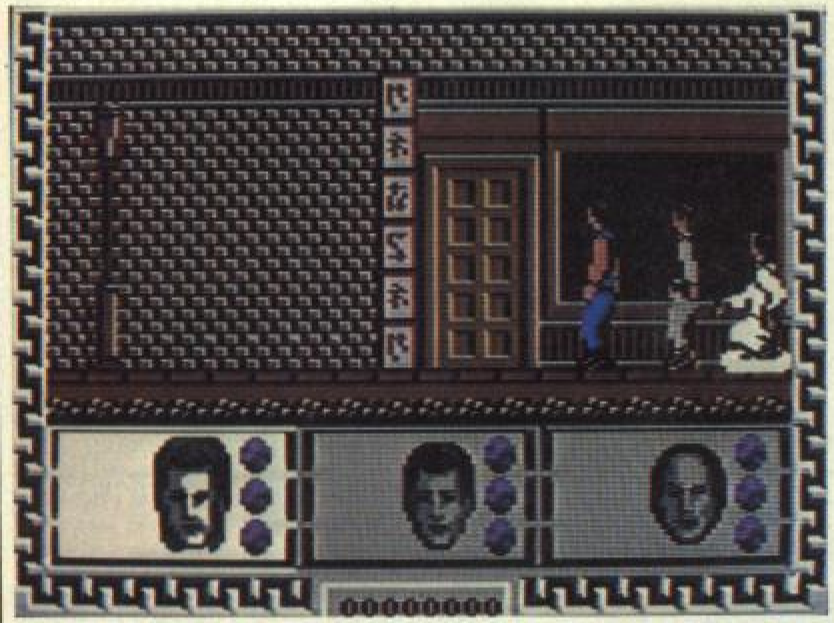
The three heroes travel together through Chinatown, which scrolls past as they progress. There are four stages to be negotiated before Lo Pan himself is encountered: the streets of Little China; the sewers; Lo Pan's headquarters and finally the marriage chamber, where the final conflict with Lo Pan takes place.

As Lo Pan's henchmen attack it is up to you to choose which character to use against them. Jack uses his fists, Wang martial arts, and Egg Shen relies on magic spells. Unarmed martial arts experts are the first enemy encountered – while further on, Lo Pan's elemental beings, the Storms, must be destroyed.

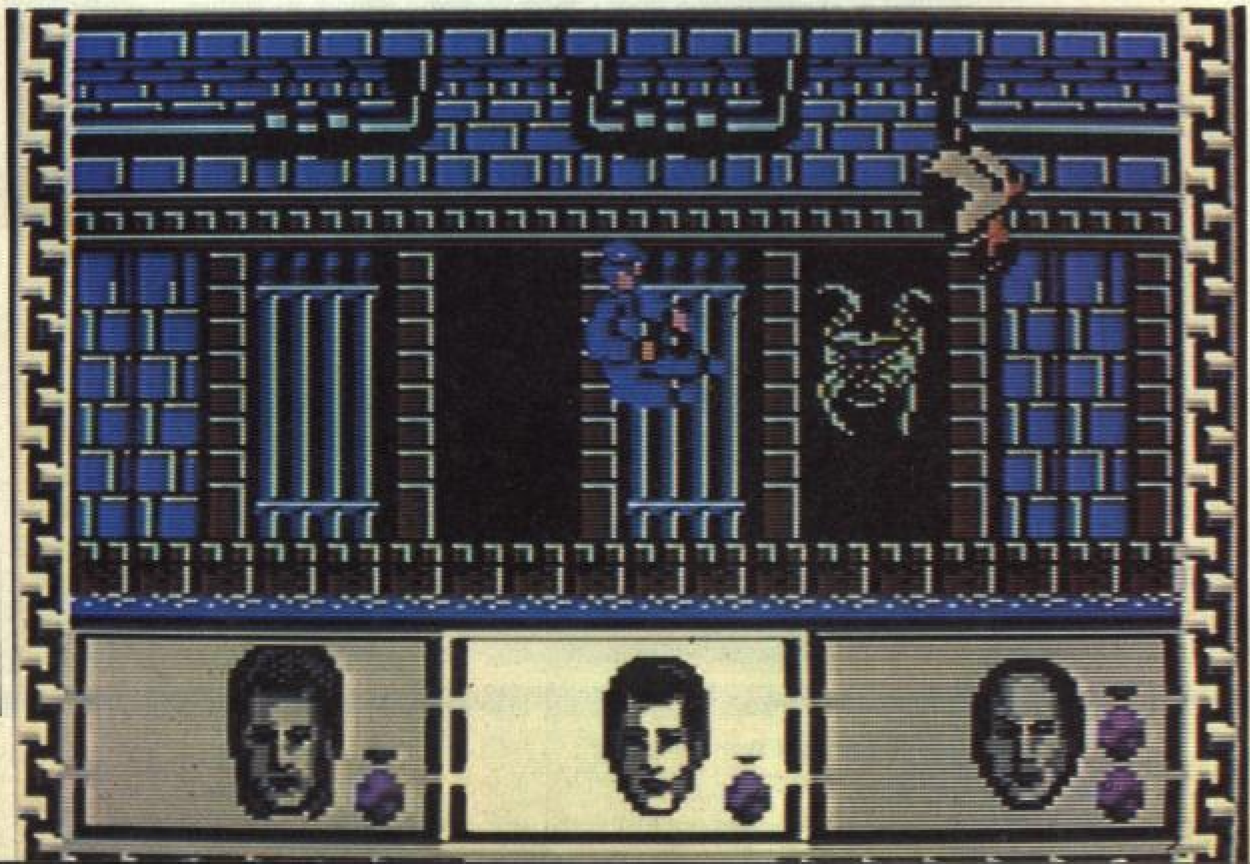
The attackers become increasingly difficult to defeat as the levels progress, so the threesome have to rely on the weapons found within the Mandarin's domain. Jack gains his 'Bushmaster' gun, Wang collects a sword and Egg Shen increases his magical strength. The three heroes also need to supplement their energy levels throughout the adventure, and do so by eating. Each character's energy status is displayed at the bottom of the screen, alongside the respective face.

When Lo Pan's army has been destroyed the villainous War Lord himself can be dealt with, a task which takes the combined efforts of all three characters. Successfully ridding the world of the oriental menace allows the rescue of the green-eyed beauties, and they all live happily ever after . . . maybe.

▽ **Jack Burton and his merry band hot-foot it through the streets of Little China and straight into Lo pan's domain**



▽ **Wang Chi somersaults to avoid Lo Pan's henchman, but if the goon doesn't get him, the sewer monster will!**





Not so hot on the heels of the John Carpenter film comes the somewhat less inspiring licensed computer game. Big Trouble **borrows heavily from the film in all but its action, a commodity in which this binary edition is sadly lacking. The endless repetition becomes too much, as one henchman follows another to that Little China in the sky. I even found my mind wandering while I was playing, which is a fair indication of the degree to which it grabbed my attention . . .**



A very sarcastic 'whoopee' to announce the arrival of yet another dire piece of software. Why was this ever released? The film has disappeared into the depths of obscurity, and the game is so lame that it is in desperate need of a wheelchair. The program is basically a simple Kung-fu Master **clone, severely lacking in action and variety. It is both unexciting and tedious, and I soon became totally and utterly bored. Another session only consolidated this view, and turning the power off came as a welcome relief. As for the tenner price tag – Electric Dreams ought to have a wet blanket thrown over them . . .**



The film bombed, and if there's any justice in the world the licensed game will follow it. It's extremely dull, consisting of three characters walking along a scrolling background, beating up anything that gets in their way – no thanks! Big Trouble In Little China **has a unpolished feel about it, as if no-one could really be bothered with making it look smart, or at least tarting it up to hide the uninspiring gameplay. I wouldn't bother with this if I were you, it isn't worth the money or effort.**

PRESENTATION 55%
Adequate instructions but little else worthy of mention.

GRAPHICS 58%
Pretty backdrops, average animation, wobbly scrolling and little variation.

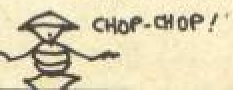
SOUND 20%
No music and sparse spot effects.

HOOKABILITY 48%
Easy enough to play, but not overly thrilling.

LASTABILITY 24%
Repetitive and generally uninteresting.

VALUE 27%
Expensive for a piece of substandard budget-quality software.

OVERALL 34%
A poor tie-in and a weak addition to the beat 'em up range. You'd be better off seeing the film four times instead . . .



FEUD

Bulldog (Mastertronic), £1.99 cass, joystick

It's a sad fact that some brothers don't get on as well as they should – and Leanoric and Learic fall into this category. Normally this isn't such a bad thing – a few hastily spoken words, maybe the odd bash around the head and any problems are soon history. Sadly this case isn't the norm, as both brothers are master magicians, equipped with the ability to conjure up all number of abominations. Their equivalent of a brotherly punch-up makes an SS-20 attack look like a limply thrown Snappit.

In this particular case Leanoric got out the old chicken entrails, cavorted and jumped about a bit then chanted the name of every station on the Met line which promptly turned Learic into a frog. It's okay being an evolutionary perfect being hopping about in the mud machine, but Learic found it difficult to use his digital watch and few other day to day objects. This made him a bit angry, so Learic is after his revenge . . . and that's what *Feud* is all about.

Set in the mystic land of Little Dullford, the player takes control of Learic and the computer assumes the role of his brother. The brothers are well versed in the arts of necromancy, and set out to demonstrate their skills on each other.

Learic and Leanoric concoct their spells by travelling around the flip-screen landscape and collecting rare herbs and roots from the countryside. When the appropriate ingredients have been gathered, the wizard returns to his cauldron and mixes the spell. When the ingredients are mixed, the charm is added to the wizard's armoury.

The 12 individual spells require two herbal ingredients, with the recipes contained in a leather-bound book. Pages from this magical manual are displayed in a window at the bottom of the main screen: pressing the fire button and moving in a direction turns its pages.

The spells' effects range from making Learic invisible to creating zombies, shooting lightning bolts and teleporting around the countryside. Some last for only one blast, whereas others endure for some time (the teleport spell for instance).

Leanoric does not remain idle while you search for ingredients – he stomps around the leafy glades collecting herbs and roots, concocting spells of his own. Leanoric freezes for a split second when he appears on screen – an ideal opportunity to zap him with a spell.

Statues in the status area represent the two magicians' energy, with the victim's statue sliding a little deeper into the ground when a successful spell has been cast. The magician whose statue disappears first has lost the feud, leaving the victor to claim Little Dullford as his own.



Graphically Feud **is a real treat, having some lovely scenery and plenty of neat touches, such as peasants strolling around, going about their daily chores. The gameplay leaves a bit to be desired though, tending to be a bit repetitive and involving large amounts of walking around and collecting, rather than zapping your brotherly opponent. The land of Little Dullford is pretty huge, and once again, mapping would appear to be the order of the day. I'm not totally convinced that** Feud **will keep you entertained for more than a week or two and, but it's certainly among the better arcade adventures to have surfaced lately.**



Ho hum . . . wander around a bit, pick up this and that, use it all the right order and you've finished the game. However, this is one of the better games of its type – the basic format has been tarted up to create a nice atmosphere, which is added to by the pleasant music. Feud **should prove a good buy if you're into mapping, as there are plenty of locations and a few puzzles which shouldn't take too long to complete.** Feud **hasn't really got any immediate sparkle, but having said that, you may find it worthwhile to persevere.**



This isn't exactly super-duper, but it's the sort of game that would be a godsend on a rainy Sunday afternoon. Whiling away the hours plodding around the scenery isn't exactly awe-inspiring, but it passes the time of day pleasantly enough. The whole package looks and sounds fine, but to tell you the truth I didn't like it much because there's nothing new to make it different and exciting. Having said that, it's only three quid, and could prove a worthwhile purchase to an avid arcade adventurer.



▲ Little Dullford's occupants steer well clear while Learic and Leanoric battle it out in Feud!

▼ Learic casts a 'heal' spell, counteracting any damage sustained in the battle with his brother



PRESENTATION 81%
Generally attractive with useful in-game messages.

GRAPHICS 82%
Colourful, bold backdrops with well-drawn but poorly animated sprites.

SOUND 55%
Predictable tune and subliminal spot effects.

HOOKABILITY 60%
Instant exploration action but not much of interest to do.

LASTABILITY 47%
Fairly tiresome, especially once completed.

VALUE 65%
Sensibly priced, but not an essential purchase.

OVERALL 50%
A very average arcade adventure with some pleasant graphics, but not enough exciting action.



'FEUD IS WHAT I DO WITH THINGIE...'

ROMULUS

Quicksilva £8.95 cass only, joystick only

The Igos Transputer company are having problems: intelligent bugs are appearing in their mega-chips and rendering them useless. The thankless task of debugging has fallen on your shoulders . . .



There are plenty of ideas whirling around inside Romulus **– it's a pity that none of them are original. The three 'transition stages' borrow heavily from concepts in** Batalyx, Paradroid **and** Impossible Mission**, so there's nothing new there. The scrolling shoot 'em up is hard on the eyes, being rather garish and making the sub-games a welcome relief from the visual onslaught. Although moderately entertaining for a while,** Romulus **tends to pall rather quickly and becomes a real drag after only a few goes.**

Seated at the controls of your Vector Module, armed only with the new high-velocity FG9's (the old FG-series never was any good), you venture forth into the substrate of the transputer chip.

The main channel is displayed as a variable speed, two-way horizontally scrolling backdrop, with the module manoeuvred by use of the joystick. Initially, the circuits controlling this channel are unstable and randomly changing. One click of the fire button stabilises them and sets the channel characteristics, effectively controlling the speed and inertia of your ship.

Once inside the channel, bugs are destroyed by a swift blast and points are accumulated accordingly. Reaching a total of 100,000 heralds the appearance of the Alien Miner, the interception and destruction of which rewards you with another module.

At the end of the channel you have the opportunity to enter the 'transition stage', which takes the form of three sub-games, each accessible from a menu sheet.

The first stage is available on destruction of the first Alien Miner, presenting a series of colours and tones which must be remembered and repeated back in their original sequence.

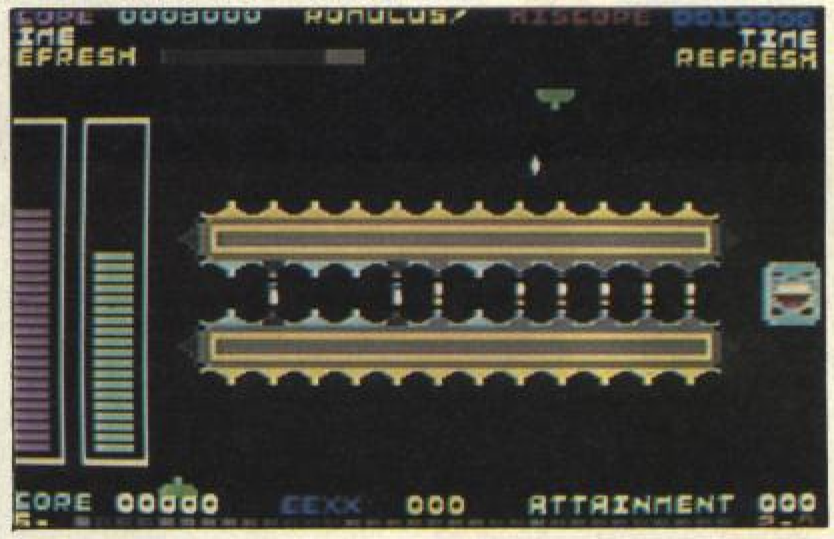
The second stage displays three pairs of boxes, the lower boxes containing a moving, coloured pattern. This section is successfully completed by quickly matching the patterns and colours of the upper three with their lower counterparts.

The final stage presents two rows of nodes, six of which must be connected to their opposing number with a 'pile.' This is accomplished by positioning your module beneath a node and shooting it once. A coloured connection then appears, which can be similarly removed by another shot. You compete against a computer controlled module in a race to connect a row of six before your opponent. Shooting a small box to the right of the array halts a timer, and thus the transition.

Successfully completing the three sub-games returns you to a different substrate channel within the transputer chip.



Take one fast scrolling routine, lots of pretty (but horrendously clashing) colours, squeaky sounds, pointless puzzles, and stick 'em together . . . what have you got? A real mess that Quicksilva have lumbered themselves with. At a glance it looks like you're in for an all action shoot 'em up – but when I started playing I found very little to shoot and hardly anything wanted to shoot me. Give it a miss.

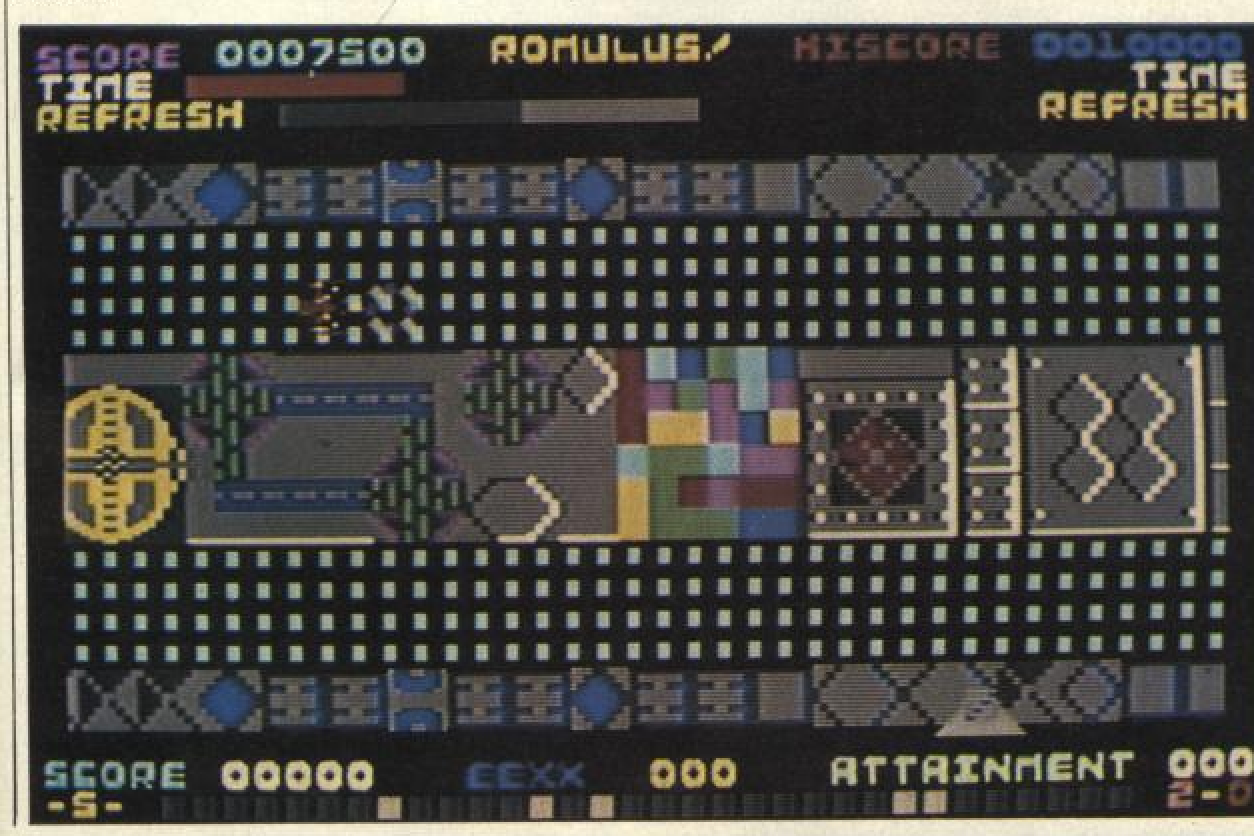


In the transition stage the computer proves a worthy adversary as you battle it out to gain control of the substrate ▲



The gameplay is far too simple, allowing huge scores to be amassed without much practice. Confusing and tastelessly coloured backdrops make it virtually impossible to see what's going on – although this doesn't really matter, as the insipid enemy offer no real threat. Your sprite is unwieldy and responds sluggishly to joystick control. Even so, all you have to do is zoom along at top speed and fire occasionally. The sub-games are simple, offering little in the way of variety and challenge. There's also very little addiction or reward on offer, and boredom sets in extremely quickly. Those are some of the reasons why you shouldn't buy Romulus.

The inside of a mega-chip channel – debugging has never been so colourful ▼



PRESENTATION 47%
Unhelpful instructions which fail to clearly convey your objectives. Good set of options however.

GRAPHICS 36%
Colourful but not particularly effective.

SOUND 41%
Bland and highly derivative spot effects.

HOOKABILITY 41%
Initially confusing and not exactly gripping.

LASTABILITY 21%
Nothing there to lure you back, even after the first attempt.

VALUE 22%
There are many better games of this type available for far less.

OVERALL 27%
A badly designed and unaddictive shoot 'em up.

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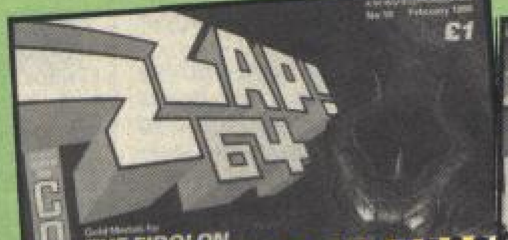
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DOC THE DESTROYER

Melbourne House, £9.95 cass, joystick or keys

Doc is a time traveller who is normally found whizzing around the timeways in search of adventure. However, at the moment he's having problems. Doc stopped at the world of the Domed City thinking that he would find a good time, but has somehow lost his nifty time machine and consequently can't escape from the era. His only hope is to put himself directly under the control of your good self, the only being capable of guiding him to the location of his lost vehicle.

Doc the Destroyer is a keyboard or joystick controlled multiple choice text adventure, with fighting screen intermissions and RPG overtones.

The action begins with the definition of Doc's character. The player starts with 60 units, to be distributed amongst Doc's five characteristics: Strength, Endurance, Intelligence, Luck and Charisma. This versatile procedure allows extreme variation in our hero's character, ranging from a lucky wimp with a magnetic personality, to an immensely strong musclebound oaf with one brain cell.

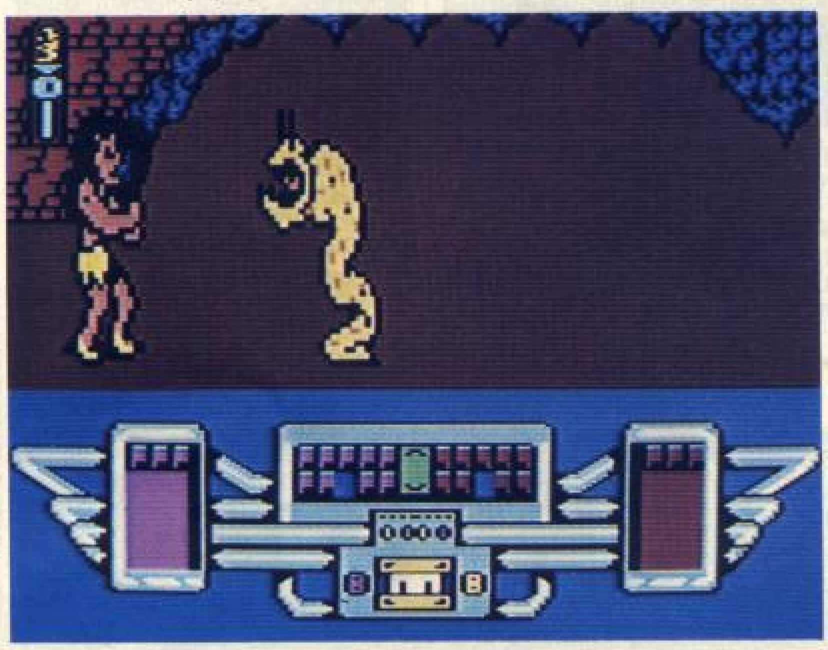
Once Doc's character has been defined, text appears in the main display area and is scrolled by pressing the fire button. A series of multiple choices allow the player to make decisions – altering the direction of movement, picking up or dropping objects and so on. The scrolling text mode returns when an option has been chosen, remaining until another prompt appears.

Occasionally Doc meets another character. At this stage, choosing the fight option changes the screen display to show two characters – the hero on the left and the aggressor on the right. The player has direct control of Doc, moving him left and right across the screen. Manoeuvres executed via combinations of the joystick and fire button result in attacking or defensive actions. The combatants' energy is depicted as a square-filled box in a display area at the bottom of the screen. The squares disappear one by one as hits are sustained, recipients dying when none are left.



This is an interesting attempt at creating a role playing fantasy using both text and fighting scenes to convey the action. However, the quality varies so much throughout that it spoils the overall effect. The graphics and sound aren't up to much and do little to create any atmosphere. The computer player appears to have had a lot more practice at fighting, which makes it extremely difficult to get into. There are a couple of elements which could have been used to good effect, but the overall impression given is not good.

▼ **Doc had better live up to his name and destroy the snake – it doesn't look like it's paying a social visit . . .**



▼ **A serious-looking Doc has a difficult choice to make . . . decisions, decisions**





There are two parts to Doc the Destroyer: a weak beat 'em up and an even weaker 'adventure' section. The latter seems to contain no logical pattern, with certain sections reappearing regardless of which option is chosen. The combat section is extremely simplistic, needing no more involvement than pointing left and pressing the fire button to defeat most opponents. I didn't enjoy either section, and the urge to return was minimal.

Doc encounters all manner of creatures during his search – with hunched uglies, sewer rats, dogs and sword wielding hostiles to be overcome if he is to return to his home time.



What a bore . . . seeing the same uninteresting chunks of text scroll up the screen time and time again is most tiresome. Having to constantly make the same choices and keep on visiting the same old locations is tedious, as is partaking in an unoriginal and sub-standard fighting sequence. If you're into adventuring buy an adventure, if you're into fighting games there are plenty available – and there are plenty of good RPGs. Don't bother considering this incredibly weak half-baked mush of all three.

PRESENTATION 80%
Generally slick.

GRAPHICS 45%
Chunky sprites during the fight sequences and little else to excite.

SOUND 69%
A fairly bland tune plays non-stop.

HOOKABILITY 40%
A mildly interesting concept which fails to stir due to bad implementation.

LASTABILITY 22%
Very repetitive and lacking excitement – even the fight scenes are dull.

VALUE 23%
Overpriced and underdeveloped.

OVERALL 32%
An uninspiring mixture of the worst parts of three different game formats.



KINETIK

Firebird, £7.95 cass, joystick or keys

Kinetik is strange place. To look at, it's a perfectly normal planet, colourfully vegetated and dotted with cool tranquil ponds. However, the occupants of a spaceship that landed on the planet surface have just discovered that the beauty is only skin deep . . .

In the darkest depths of the planet lives the Kinemator, an infinitely powerful creature who bends and reverses the laws of physics. When the spaceship entered his domain he decided not to let it return to orbit until three giant letters were collected from positions around the planet and delivered to him.

The player controls the spaceship, a spherical craft capable of movement anywhere within the confines of the screen. Move to the extreme left or right and a fresh screen is brought into view. On each screen the laws of gravity are different, so the spaceship comes under the influence of powerful inertial forces, bouncing off vegetation and landscape features.

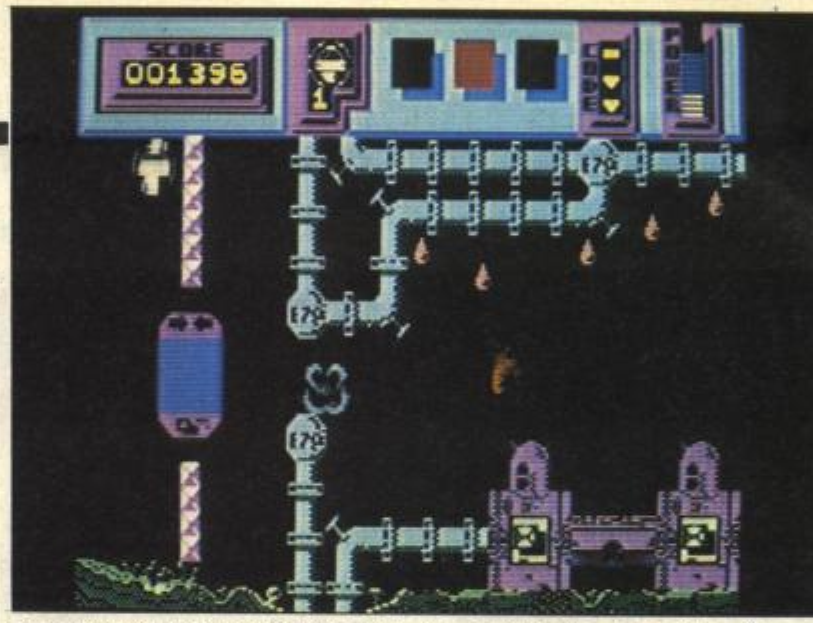
Contact with a floating alien depletes the ship's shield, represented as an on-screen bar which diminishes in three steps towards a fatal zero. Weakened shields are restored to full strength by picking up a 'flower-power' pod or by flying the ship through water.

The objective is to travel through 43 screens, pick up the three letters – P, A and X – and present them to the Kinemator on the 44th and final screen. There are five other objects; Powder Gun, Safety Shield, Anti Physics, Anti Gravity and Teleporter, which can be picked up and used to help complete the task, although only three are carried at any one time.

The Powder Gun is used to frighten away alien marauders, Safety Shield slows down the depletion of the shield, the Teleporter is used once to travel to another screen and Anti Physics and Anti Gravity nullify the Kinemator's powers. As each letter is picked up, less objects can be carried and survival becomes increasingly difficult . . .



Attractive it may well be, but playable and compelling it most certainly is not. Kinetik is a run of the mill arcade adventure/platform game with an innovative, but ultimately worthless control method. Movement requires a lot of effort and even more patience, and you don't have much time to concentrate on the game itself as you wrestle with the joystick. To make matters worse there aren't many locations to explore, and there are even less puzzles to solve. In fact, the objective is basically very dull – simply progress as far right as possible, avoiding and shooting creatures while fighting to control the ship. Such a pity – if the control method was easier to get to grips with and there was more to do, Kinetik would have been wonderful.



The pipework is harmless, but beware the slinky worm – stage right ▲

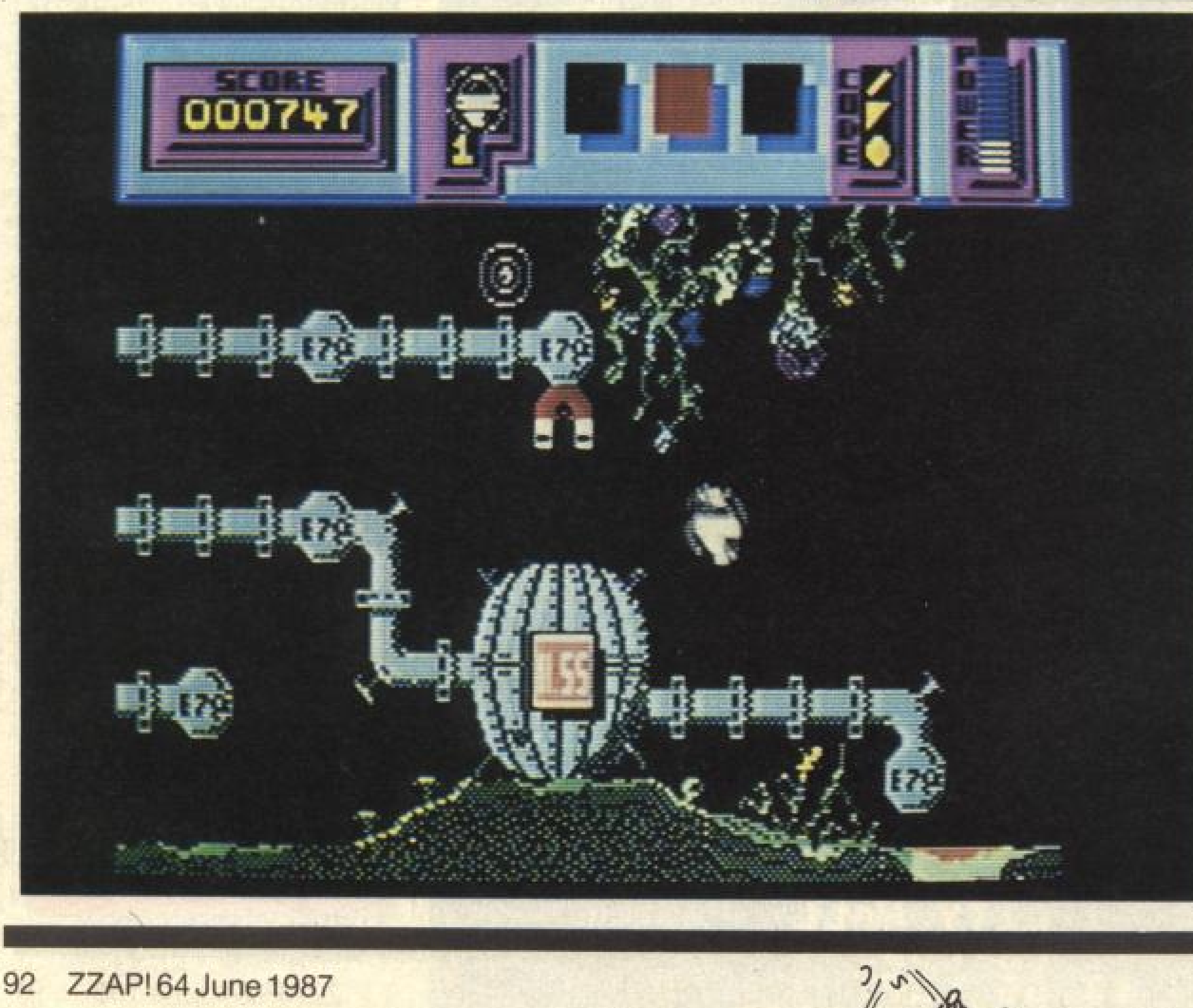


The major theme of Kinetik is the odd inertial and gravitational forces exerted upon the spaceship – and the programmers certainly went to town on them. Some screens are desperately difficult to overcome and as it is relatively easy to lose a life, the last thing you want is an uncontrollable spaceship whizzing all over the place. After several frenzied attempts, I eventually had to give up because my arm was aching through the effort! Kinetik is a nice idea which fails to entertain and is therefore worthless.



I've played a few games with strange control methods in the past, but this one is the strangest of the lot. Throughout the quest you have to battle against the joystick to try and counter the powerful inertial and gravitational forces. Some screens are frustrating beyond belief as it takes ages just to get the spaceship to move left or right. Escaping a screen sometimes takes a minute or two of severe joystick waggling, which eventually becomes annoying. Personally I prefer to pit my wits against a troublesome sprite – not the joystick.

A serene looking landscape – but don't be fooled, it's littered with danger ▼



PRESENTATION 81%
Generally pleasant, with sound on/off and keyboard/joystick options.

GRAPHICS 86%
Very pretty hi-res backdrops and sprites.

SOUND 63%
Adequate spot effects and jingles.

HOOKABILITY 49%
The incredibly fussy control method makes the game very difficult to play – and enjoy.

LASTABILITY 50%
Almost too difficult to be worthwhile, although perseverence may bring some reward.

VALUE 49%
Not enough variety or challenge to warrant an eight pound price tag.

OVERALL 56%
Ignore the unusual control method and all you have is an average arcade adventure.

DECATHLON

Firebird, £1.99 cass, joystick only



The godfather of the joystick-waggling sports simulations has returned – and Commodore owners everywhere can now re-live memories of tortured biceps and broken joysticks. Up to four players can battle it out over ten events, or use the practice option to participate in single events.

In each event, the player waggles the joystick left and right to give their on-screen alter-ego the power to move. Each left and right movement relates to the sprite's leg movement – the faster the joystick is oscillated, the faster the athlete's velocity. A bar at the bottom of the screen represents the 'power' being pumped into each athlete, giving the player a visual representation of their efforts. The relevant time, distance or height is displayed at the end of each event and points are awarded according to effort.



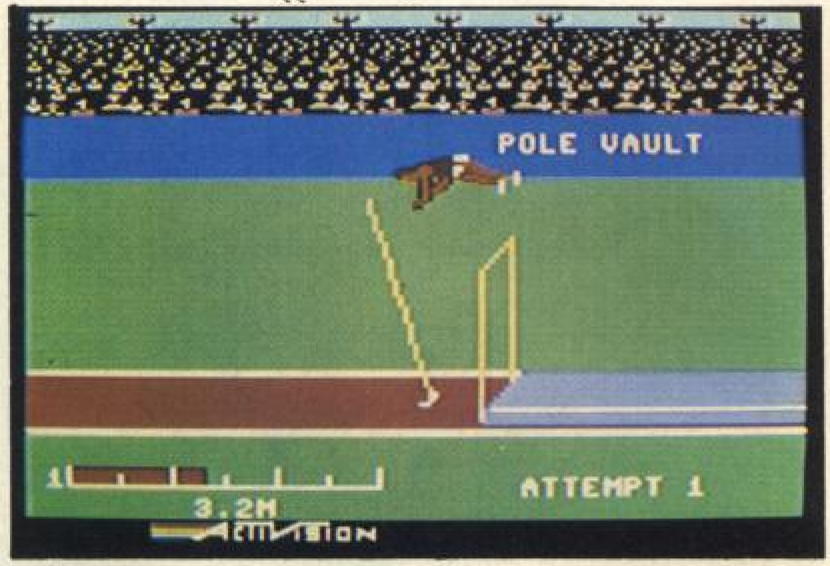
I groaned inwardly when offered the chance to participate in a four-player joystick-waggling decathlon, bearing in mind my previous aching experiences with this joystick-wrecking classic. But I played. And surprisingly, even though I was sweaty and very tired, I was thrilled by the feel of adrenalin pumping through my veins. Decathlon **is crude in comparison with the Epyx sports simulation, but it's no worse for it. After the ten gruelling events you feel as if you've been through it all physically – especially the 1500m, a killer of an event! If the idea of physically exerting yourself playing a computer game seems unreasonable, avoid this like a games lesson.**



Although Decathlon **variants have been numerous, none have managed to capture the thrill and exhilaration of the original. What makes this so special is the uncluttered gameplay – it's just you versus the machine (or a second player). The graphics and sound are also basic, but they display the action perfectly. Although the action may become repetitive in the short term, it's the sort of timeless program that gets loaded and played ages after it was bought, especially if there is some excess energy in need of being burnt off. If you fancy putting your joystick on the line give this a whirl – it's a classic.**

Running events are played head-to-head, with the screen displaying two tracks (if one or three players are playing the computer provides a pacer). A starting gun is fired and players have to waggle as fast as possible until the finish line is crossed. The throwing and jumping events bring the fire button into action. Once again, a waggling action is used on the run up, and the fire button is pressed to either release the object carried, jump or lower the pole (on the pole vault). A further press of the fire button is required to signal the athletic to let go of the pole.

After the final event, the total points are added and a grand total awarded.

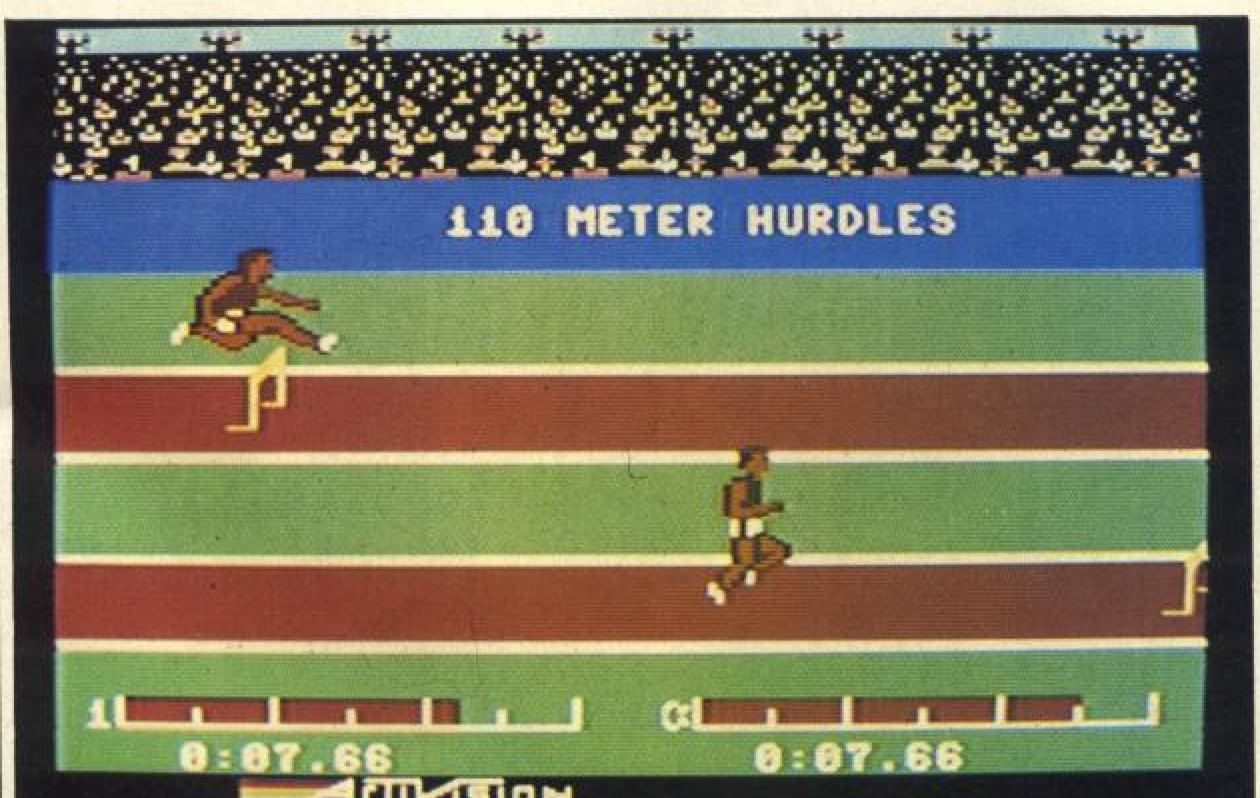


▲ **A first attempt at 3.2m is an easy clearance, but the bar still has up to 2m to go!**



If you don't mind replacing your joystick every other game, then Decathalon **could be the program for you. There's no denying the simulation's simplicity, but it still has tremendous playability. Although the computer offers a reasonable adversary, the game really comes into its own when played in a group: the competition generated makes up for any of the program's deficiencies. Well worth two quid, but a new joystick comes a touch more expensive!**

▼ **How embarrassing! The computer controlled hurdler is well in the lead at the half-way stage**



PRESENTATION 80%
Supports up to four players, and features a practice option.

GRAPHICS 61%
Not thrilling, but the sprites are well animated and the backgrounds scroll smoothly.

SOUND 34%
A few suitable spot effects and jingles.

HOOKABILITY 86%
Simplistic joystick-waggling gives instant pleasure.

LASTABILITY 70%
Although the action is repetitive, its timeless nature brings you back for more.

VALUE 85%
Lots of sweaty enjoyment for a couple of quid.

OVERALL 76%
The cheapest and best joystick-waggling sports simulation available.



Is This Really
Auf Wiedersehen Monty?
Ah mole oh meeo
Limited Edition
Just a few lines between continental heists and yet more hairy escapades to say hello to all my fans and invite you on my most exciting and exacting journey to date, a whistle stop tour of the capitals of Europe acquiring more than just the local scenery on the way.
Oops... must dash... gendarmes hot on my tail. Will write again soon with more news of my exhilarating escapades and growing booty bag.
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THE TERMINAL MAN




SHUT UP, SIS! I'M RIGHT HERE!
YOUR MOUTH IS BIGGER THAN YOUR EYES - LOOK!!
WHAT IS IT, PAS? - THE SKYWORLDERS?
SHUSH! ONLY THE OLDIES BELIEVE THAT...
THERE'S NOTHING TO FEAR...
THIS FOREST ONLY HARBOURS PHWEETS - AND THEY'RE -
IK-IK-IK!
HARMLESS!
C'MON - LET'S GET BACK TO THE SETTLING, PAS!
STOP BEING SCARED, SIS - HEY PHWEETY COME HERE!
HE'S VERY NERVY, MUST BE THE STORM...
PAS! C'MON - THE SEARING IS ABOUT TO START AND-
THAT'S JUST A LOAD OF SUPERSTITIOUS NONSENSE -
AAAH!
PAS-PAS! LOOK!!
SCREELINGAH!!
IT'S - IT'S - RUN, SIS, RUN - C'MON, STOP GOGGLING!
AAAH!
PAS! NOT THAT WAY - THE GLOW - THE SKYW-
AUNGH!
PASSENGERS - COME TO ME - IT-IS-MY DUTY...
NO-NO!!
!


—I—I WILL SEE YOU SAFE—HYPERJUMP—LOST—SAFE...
PAS—IT'S A SKYWORLDER!
DON'T WORRY, SIS—I CAN F-FIGHT ANYTHING—I'LL SAVE...
IT'S HORRIBLE!
LOOK! THE THWEET!
PAS! HIS FACE, BODY—THEY'RE CHANGING!!
CROSS!
KEEP CALM! IT IS MY FUNCTION TO SEE YOU SAFELY BACK TO EARTH—RELY ON ME—I AM CROSS—ENGINEER ON THE SHIP ARCADIA AND—AND I AM CROSS—I AM COMPUTER XJZ 1001—MY FUNCTION TO—
THWEEE-UCK-UCK
WHAT'S HE TALKING ABOUT?
MAGIC—PERHAPS A TRANCE—BUT HE SEEMS HARMLESS...
THE THWEET FEELS SAFE...
LOOK! HE'S MELTING AGAIN! UGH!
—AMIDST THE RAIN AND THUNDER, CROSS FLICKERED ON AND OFF...
—THE COMPUTER IMAGES REPLACING THE MAIMED LIMBS OF HIS BODY UNCO-ORDINATED...
—IT WAS A HYPNOTIC VISION—BUT OTHER DANGER MADE IT'S APPROACH...
PAS!!
MULTIPLE CRASHINGS AND A STEADY PACE OF HEAVY FEET—
AIEEEH!



BY OLIVER FREY

To be Continued...

...TARGET...ENEMY NUCLEAR DEVICE...
...ATTACK...INFILTRATE...LOCATE...DESTROY...

ARMY MOVES

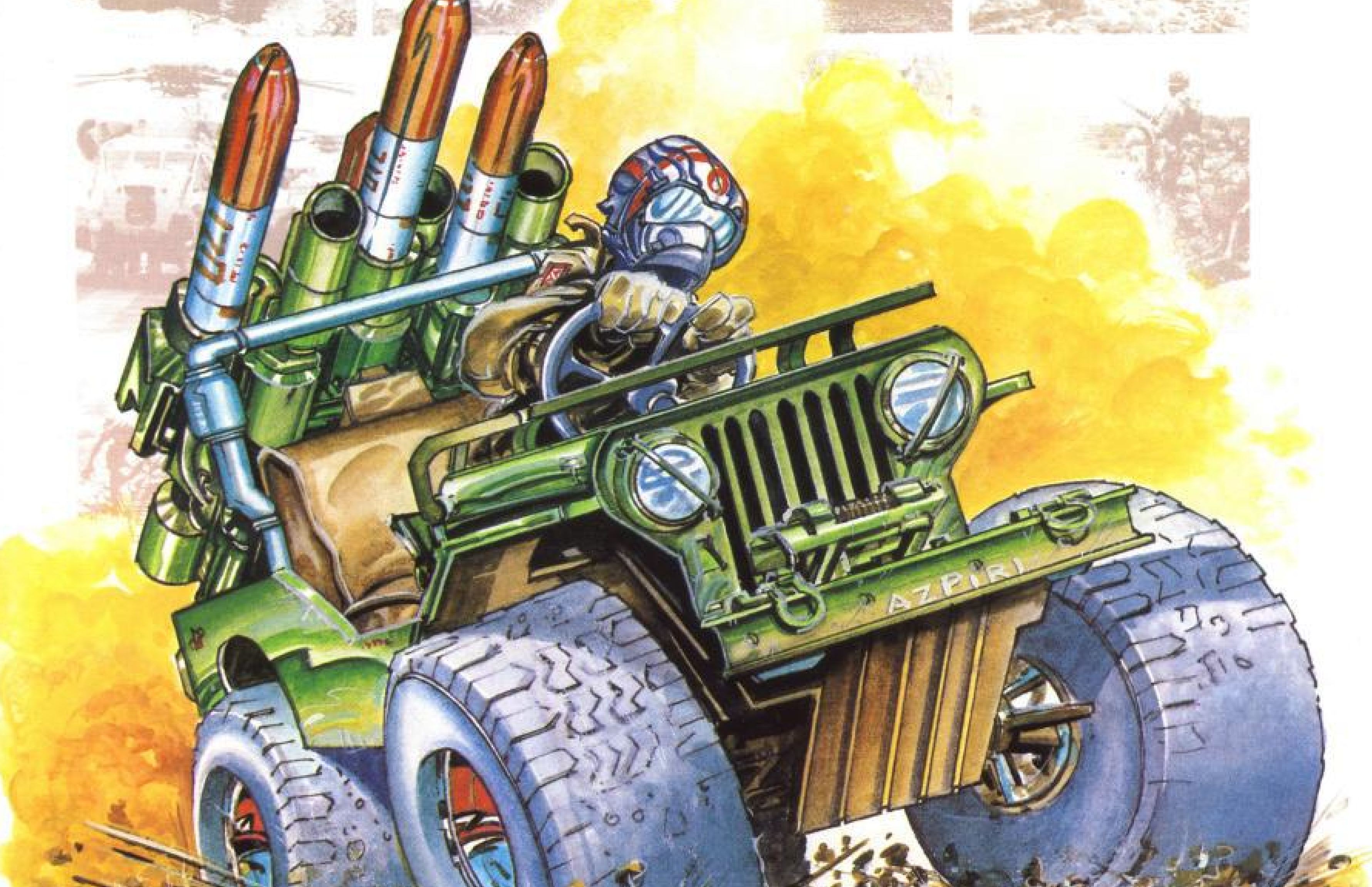
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